

**A STUDY OF THE PLACE OF SAMOAN CULTURE (FA'ASAMOA)  
IN TWO NEW ZEALAND CHURCHES**

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**A thesis**

**submitted in partial fulfilment**

**of the requirements for the Degree**

**of**

**Master of Arts in Religious Studies**

**in the**

**University of Canterbury**

**by**

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*University of Canterbury*

*February 1993*

## ERRATA

The following is a list of errors detected after the initial printing of this book.

- p.16 para 1 - availability not avaiability
- p.19 para 1 - insert 'from his parish' after 'all breakaways'
- p.25 last line - insert 'six months before it is held' after 'at least'
- p.26 para 1 - insert '(which usually takes five years)' after 'completing his training'
- p.36 para 1 - characteristics not characterists
- p.39 para 1 - insert 'enter' after 'both parties'
- p.41 para 3 - following 'part of this' delete '(if not all)'
- p.44 note 26 - deterrent not eterrant
- p.50 para 1 - *tulafale* not *tuafale*
- p.50 para 2 - *suafa* not *fuafa*
- p.51 para 2 - finances or labour not finances on labour
- p.56 para 2 - insert 'e.g. the devillfish(octopus) god' after 'district gods'
- p.59 para 2 - following 'the Minister' delete 'serving' and add in its place 'distributing'
- p.62 last para - insert 'the PIC' after 'positions in'
- p.63 para 3 - titled not title
- p.74 last para - insert '(Deacon)' after 'Elder'
- p.95 last para - surrendered not surrendered

BR  
1483  
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.P156  
1993

## **DEDICATION**

**For Mum, Dad, Peter and Aneri**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge primarily the tireless efforts of my Supervisor Colin Brown in helping me to complete this study. Your efficiency, guidance and care helped me through a sometimes lonely year of study. Thank you also to Dr Malama Meleisea for your helpful comments in the matters relating to *fa'aSamoa*. To Tafu, your encouragement and assistance were greatly appreciated. Last but not least thanks Mum for keeping me company during those late nights and for the cups of tea ...

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### CHAPTER

### PAGE:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

GLOSSARY

INTRODUCTION

|    |  |   |      |
|----|--|---|------|
| 1. | Western Samoans and Christianity : Historical Background | — | 1.   |
| 2. | The Minister and the concept of 'feagaiga'               | — | 22.  |
| 3. | Chiefs, Elders and Deacons                               | — | 49.  |
| 4. | Women  | — | 67.  |
| 5. | Youth  | — | 89.  |
|    | CONCLUSION   | — | 104. |

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDICES

|              |                          |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| Appendix 1 - | Methodology              |
| Appendix 2 - | Copies of Questionnaires |
|              | Women (English Version)  |
|              | (Samoan Version)         |
|              | Youth                    |

## **ABSTRACT**

This study attempts to look at the influence that *fa'a Samoa* (Samoan Culture) has on churches in New Zealand, based on the experiences of Samoans from the Pacific Islanders Presbyterian Church and Congregational Christian Church of Samoa. The bulk of the research was carried out in the Christchurch area over the period of a year. Survey techniques included questionnaires, interviews with key figures in the Samoan community and participant observation. A key aim of the study was to compare the views of respondents who were born and/or raised in New Zealand and born and/or raised in Samoa.

Chapter One provides a historical background to the establishment of the relationship between Samoans and Christianity.

Chapters Two and Three focus on two of the most powerful leadership figures in Samoa church life generally - the 'Minister' and the 'Deacon'.

In contrast, Chapters Four and Five focus on two groups that have been to some extent always in the background of Samoan church life - 'Women' and 'Youth'.

## GLOSSARY

|                   |   |  |
|-------------------|---|--|
| <i>aiga</i>       | - | family (both immediate and extended, related, home).   |
| <i>aitu</i>       | - | class of pre-Christian gods of human origin, usually took the form of animals, birds, humans or other natural objects. |
| <i>ali'i</i>      | - | chief, lord, gentleman (pol. for man, boy).  |
| <i>Atua</i>       | - | God, also pre-Christian gods of non-human origin.  |
| <i>'Ava</i>       | - | kava (shrub, ceremonial drink), orator's cup.  |
| <i>fa'alupega</i> | - | traditional words pertaining to each village etc.  |
| <i>fa'aSamoa</i>  | - | Samoa culture or custom, Samoan way, Samoan language.  |
| <i>feagaiga</i>   | - | covenant, testament, agreement, (pol.) minister of religion.   |
| <i>matai</i>      | - | titled family head, general term applied to both chiefs and orators.   |
| <i>taula'itu</i>  | - | spirit medium; class of priests in pre-Christian Samoa.  |
| <i>taulasea</i>   | - | bush doctor; class of priests in pre-Christian Samoa.  |
| <i>tiakono</i>    | - | deacon or elder in the church.   |
| <i>tulafale</i>   | - | orator, talking chief.   |

## INTRODUCTION

Samoans have been migrating to New Zealand in significant numbers since the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>1</sup> Today they are the dominant Pacific Island and migrant community in New Zealand.<sup>2</sup> Although there has been some significant research carried out in relation to the Samoan migrant community (eg. Pitt Emerging Pluralism and Kallen The Western Samoan Kinship Bridge), most of this has been few and far between. Normally research has been limited to providing 'general' information on aspects of *fa'aSamoa* (Samoan Culture) and have been primarily aimed at the non-Samoan reader (eg. Ngan-Woo Fa'aSamoa : The World of the Samoans and P. Kinloch Talking Past Each Other). One area in which research has been scarce is that of the church and its place in the Samoan migrant community.

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<sup>1</sup> B. Duncan 'Christianity: Pacific Island Traditions' p 128 in Religions of New Zealanders ed. Donovan.

<sup>2</sup> eg. Of a total of 94,656 Pacific Island Polynesians living in New Zealand in 1986, 50,199 were Samoans.



This thesis attempts to address this area by focusing on the two most popular churches attended by the majority of Samoan migrants: Pacific Islanders Presbyterian Church and Congregational Christian Church of New Zealand.<sup>3</sup>

The overall question that this study attempts to address is: 'How does *fa'aSamoa* influence churches in New Zealand?' More specifically it has a two-fold purpose: -

1. To consider the relationship between *fa'aSamoa* and the church (in the context of the PIC and CCCS churches in New Zealand).
2. To compare the views of the Samoan-born and New Zealand-born and/or raised Samoans (from both the Pacific Islanders Presbyterian Church and Congregational Christian Church of Samoa).

Chapter One provides the historical background not only to the arrival of Christianity to Samoa and the impact that it had there, but also to the migration of Samoans to New Zealand and their contribution to the establishment of churches here [specifically PIC and CCCS]. Once the scene has been set, the remaining chapters deal with the various groups in the Church in view of the influence that *fa'aSamoa* has on their participation in the church.

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3 From henceforth referred to as PIC and CCCS.

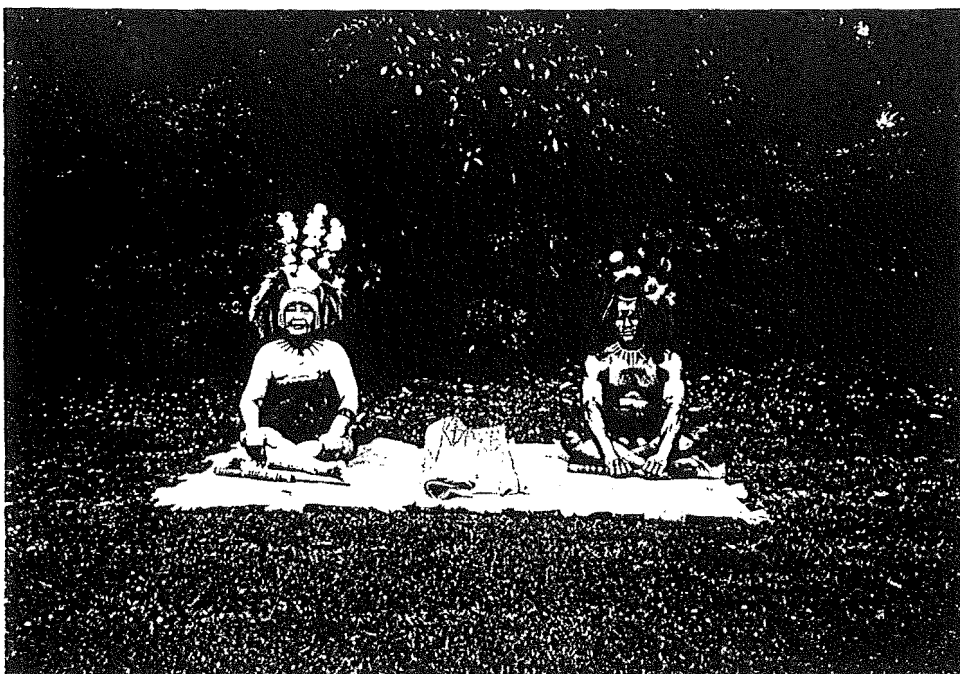
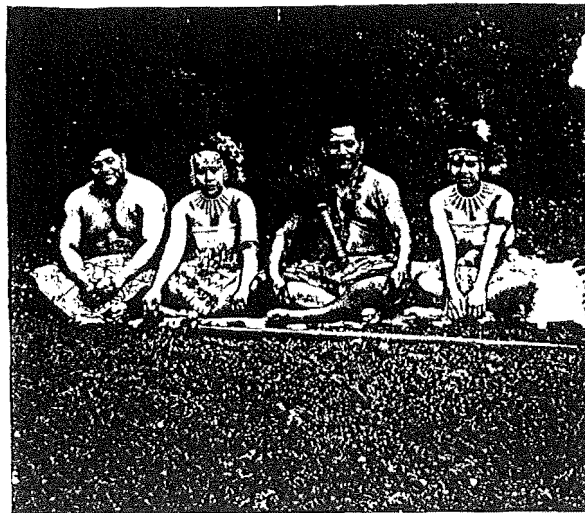
Chapter Two deals with probably the most dominating figure in Samoan church life - the Minister (*faifeau*). His role in relation to his own congregation and to Samoan society generally is considered in light of the concept of *feagaiga* (covenant). This chapter attempts to illustrate how many of the elements that existed in the original *feagaiga* relationship between a brother and sister have been transferred to that which exists between the contemporary Minister and his congregation.

Chapter Three focuses on two important leadership roles both in *fa'aSamoa* and the church: the *matai* (chief) and the *tiakono* (deacon). This chapter attempts to show the impact that Christianity had on the 'religious' authority formerly experienced by *matai* in pre-Christian Samoa and how much of that authority has been transferred to the role of deacon.

Alternatively, Chapter Four and Chapter Five deal with two groups that are usually in the background of activities pertaining to *fa'aSamoa* and the church and which lack the prominent leadership roles in both: 'Women' and 'Youth'. Both chapters attempt to reassess the roles of both in relation to the church and *fa'aSamoa*.

Two terms that will be constantly referred to throughout this study are "church" and "fa'a Samoa". "Church" and "Culture" are two concepts each with their own distinctive meaning and identity. For the purposes of this study I have adopted the Oxford Dictionary definition for both. "Church" is defined as 'the collective body of Christians or organised Christian society'. By "culture" I mean 'the customs and civilisation of a particular time or people'. (*The Little Oxford Dictionary pp 92 & 131*).

# CHAPTER ONE



## WESTERN SAMOANS AND CHRISTIANITY

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter provides a brief historical background to Samoan religion from pre-Christian times to the introduction of Christianity. It explores some of the factors that stimulated the initial migration of Samoans to New Zealand and the establishment of the Pacific Islanders' Presbyterian Church and Congregational Christian Church of Samoa here.<sup>1</sup>

#### Traditional Samoan Religion (Pre-Christian Samoa)

On reaching Samoa in 1830, John Williams, the missionary pioneer of the Pacific, discovered there a religion distinct from those found in other Pacific islands that he had already encountered. Outwardly, there was little vestige of an established or formalised religion. There were no temples, idols, or powerful priesthood. Williams in his 1832 Journal compared Samoa to Rarotonga and Tahiti:

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<sup>1</sup> From henceforth referred to as PIC and CCCS.

*Not having either idols, temples, Maraes or sacred Places of any description of course they have not the religious rites, ceremonies, sacrifices and feasts that existed at Tahiti, Rarotonga [sic] and other islands.<sup>2</sup>*

To the outside observer therefore, the Samoans appeared to be a 'godless' people. This observation was made by their fellow Pacific islanders, the Rarotongans, who referred to a person that was lax in his religious practices as a 'Godless Samoan'.<sup>3</sup>

The Samoans did in fact have an established religion which was polytheistic in character. There were three types of gods/deities recognised by Samoans: *Atua*, *Aitu* and *Tupua*. *Atua*, which were of non-human origin, were superior and resided either in the *Lagi* (the heavens), or in *Pulotu* (the afterworld). *Tagaloa*, was the supreme *Atua* responsible for the creation of the universe, earth and humanity. Unlike the other types of deities, *Atua* remained aloof from the ordinary lives of humans and were not worshipped in any particular form. *Aitu* were of human origin and usually took the form of animals, birds, humans or other natural objects. They comprised war-gods, family-gods, tutelary deities of various trades and employment.

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<sup>2</sup> R. Moyle ed. The Samoan Journals of John Williams 1830 and 1832 p 264.  
<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

From his birth, a Samoan would come under the protection of a particular *aitu*. If that *aitu* took the form of an eel, then that became his own object of veneration and he would avoid causing it harm or desecration.<sup>4</sup> Various priests (known as '*taulaitu*' and '*taulasea*'), were responsible for consulting and communicating with specific *aitu* on behalf of ordinary humans. *Taula-aitu-o-aitu-tau* (priests of the war gods), were consulted during wartime in order to invoke the assistance of the war-gods such as Nafanua, a female deity held in awe by all Samoans among other things for her fighting prowess.<sup>5</sup>

*Tupua* were the deified spirits of dead chiefs or deceased persons of high rank. In the worship of lesser family or household gods, this duty was usually conducted by the *matai* (chief) of the family who acted as priest or family mediator for the gods. Worship involved a libation in the form of a cup of 'ava (ceremonial drink), to the gods and prayers. There was a belief that the *matai* was originally a descendant of *Tagaloa* resulting from his liaisons with human women.<sup>6</sup>

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4 Each person had their own *aitu* and their own object of veneration. A fish that might be sacred to one person but was not necessarily regarded in the same way by someone else.

5 Her name literally means 'Hidden inland' and is the name of the goddess of a district in the westend of the island of Savai'i. Daughter of *Saveasi'uleo*, god of *Pulotu* (the afterworld) Refer to G. Turner *Samoa: A Hundred Years Ago and Long Before*, p 38

6 *Mana* (sacred power) was transmitted to the descendants of the human women whom [*Tagaloaalagi*, the creator-deity] took as his wives and their demi-god progeny were the ancestors of the paramount chiefly lineage of Samoa. Refer to P. Schoeffel *Daughters of Sina*, p 282

Socially and politically the *matai* were the representative heads of every family in Samoa and provided the foundation of traditional Samoan society.<sup>7</sup> As a group, they were the decision-making and disciplinary body in the day-to-day running of village affairs. The *matai* played a key role in both the religious and secular spheres as family mediator for the gods and decision-makers in family matters. They symbolised the close affinity that existed between the secular and the religious in the lives of Samoans in pre-Christian Samoa and which to some extent, still exists today.

#### Arrival of the Missionaries

For the large number of Samoans who belong to the CCCS, 1830 is the year commemorated as marking the introduction of Christianity with the arrival of John Williams of the London Missionary Society.<sup>8</sup> [According to Samoan Methodists, Tongan missionaries had arrived earlier in 1828].<sup>9</sup>

Prior to the visit of the missionary, several significant factors had combined to make Samoa a ripe ground for sowing the seeds of Christianity. Deserters from passing ships, convicts and other Europeans were already living in Samoa. Through them, Samoans were exposed to various aspects of European culture including their Christian God.

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7 E. Kallen The Western Samoan Kinship Bridge, p 36

8 From henceforth referred to as LMS.

9 T. O'Meara Samoa Planters, pp 43 - 44



Some Samoans had travelled overseas and to other parts of the Pacific where they saw the European culture and its material benefits. One such Samoan had served on a whaling ship under the name of Joe Gimblet. When he returned to Samoa, he began a Samoan Christian cult known as the '*Sio Vili*' (a translation of Joe Gimblet). The movement was a combination of pseudo-Christian elements. These included claims by its leader that he had the power to prophesy, heal and communicate with God. He also claimed that those who followed him would not die and when some of his followers did die, support for the movement waned.<sup>10</sup>

*Sio Vili* was an example of those who perverted and exploited the message of Christianity for their own advantage. John Williams mentioned one incident regarding *Sio Vili* in his 1830 Journal which highlighted this point:

*A few days ago he (ie. Joe Gimblet) went inland under pretense of conversing with Jehovah. On his return he said that Jehova informed him that such and such a young woman was to become his wife. She was therefore sent for and delivered over to him.*<sup>11</sup>

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10 F. Keesing Modern Samoa, p 401

11 Moyle, p 113

Through the contact with other Pacific islanders, Samoans learned of the Christian God and the changes that his message brought for them. The Tongans in particular, had links with Samoans which dated back centuries and at one time Tonga conquered and ruled over Samoa for 300 years from 950 - 1250.<sup>12</sup> Almost 600 years later the Tongans in the company of European missionaries visited Samoa again in 1828 but this time as Methodist missionaries and not enemies. When the LMS appeared on the scene there was already an awareness among Samoans of an alternative religion (ie. Christianity).

Williams was fortunate to have as passengers a Samoan chief named *Fauea* and his wife *Puaseise*. Through the assistance of *Fauea*, he was able to communicate with the Samoans using the appropriate channels of Samoan protocol.<sup>13</sup> On reaching Samoa, the missionaries were taken by *Fauea* to *Sapapali'i* his home village in the *Fa'asaleleaga* district of *Savai'i*.

They were greeted with the news that *Lei'ataua Tonumaipe'a Tamafaiga*, a powerful figure politically and religiously, had been killed 15 days prior. According to *Fauea*, he could have threatened the introduction of Christianity to Samoa had he still been alive.<sup>14</sup>

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12 S. Masterman An Outline of Samoan History, p 23

13 *ibid.*

14 Moyle, p 69

At that point in time *Malietao Va'inupo* (an ally of *Tamafaiga*), was leading an alliance that had been formed to avenge *Tamafaiga's* assassination. The assurance of a victory for the alliance was inevitable and this meant a powerful political position for *Malietao*.<sup>15</sup> Fortunately, for Williams, *Malietao* was from *Sapapali'i* and they were able to make contact with him early on. *Malietao* accepted Williams and the message that he preached and offered protection to the eight native missionaries that he left in Samoa.<sup>16</sup> In return, Williams promised to send more missionaries to Samoa as soon as it was convenient - a promise he kept a few years later when he returned in 1832.

*Malietao's* decision for him and his people to embrace Christianity was influenced to some extent by the material possessions of the missionaries and the desire to learn more about the world of the missionaries. Samoans saw education as an essential way whereby they could share in some of the benefits of European culture. With the presence of more teachers, the translation of the Bible into Samoan and the establishment of a printing press in 1839 at *Falelatai*, the work of the LMS expanded rapidly.<sup>17</sup> More formal education was later offered by the LMS at *Malua College* and *Leulumoega School* both of which were established in 1844.<sup>18</sup>

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15 J.W. Davidson *Samoa mo Samoa*, p 33

16. "According to a legend, the war goddess Nafanua, prophesied that a new religion would come to Samoa and end the rule of the old gods". M. Meleisea.  
*Lagaga: A Short History of Samoa*, p 52

17 Meleisea, p 58

18 J. Garrett *To Live Among the Stars*, p 125

LMS activity did not go unchallenged with both the Wesleyan (Methodist) and Roman Catholic missions also making their presence felt. From its very beginnings, the Wesleyan mission in Samoa showed a strong Tongan influence. It was in 1828 that the first Methodist missionaries came to Samoa arriving at *Satupa'itea* on *Sava'i'i*. However, they were not Europeans but Tongans, who had voyaged to Samoa in canoes. Although they did make some converts they were few when compared with the success that was later achieved by the LMS in 1830. Due to an informal agreement between the LMS and WMS, it was decided that only one mission should be working in Samoa - the LMS. In 1839, the last WMS missionary, Peter Turner,<sup>19</sup> was withdrawn and it was not until 1855 that the WMS was once again revived in Samoa.<sup>20</sup>

Roman Catholic activity began in 1845 by two priests of the Marist order, Father Foudaire (*Lutovi'o*), and Father Violette (*Silipele*). With support of a chief by the name of *Tuala*, from the village of *Sale'aula*, the priests found acceptance. As with the LMS, both the Roman Catholic and WMS missions with the arrival of more missionaries and the founding of educational institutions [*Piula*] Theological College (Methodist), and Moamoa Training School (Catholic) soon became permanently established in Samoa. Yet despite the missionary efforts of both the WMS and Catholics along with later missions such as the Mormon and Seventh Day Adventists; the LMS remained the dominant denomination.

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19     *ibid.* p 128

20     The Cyclopedia of Samoa, Tonga, Tahiti and the Cook Islands. p 77

Several factors contributed to the attainment of independence for the LMS as a church in Samoa. In 1875 the missionaries agreed to ordain all Samoan teachers and to give them full pastoral powers.<sup>21</sup> During the same year the missionaries organised the first annual general assembly named in Samoan, *Fono Tele* (literally 'big meeting').<sup>22</sup> The *Fono Tele* became an important decision-making body and today it is still the supreme council of the church.<sup>23</sup> In 1906, a national council was formed comprised of the elder pastors of the church called the *Au Toeaina*. Generally their responsibilities included the supervision of the ministers in their subdistricts and the recommendation of appointments and dismissals.<sup>24</sup> By 1962 the same year that Western Samoa achieved independence, a new constitution was drawn up which incorporated all the changes made to the LMS church over the years. The original name 'LMS' was replaced by the 'Congregational Christian Church of Samoa' and the first independent national church in the South Pacific was officially established.

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21 S. Tiffany "The Politics of Denominational Organisation in Samoa" p 433 from Mission, Church, and Sect in Oceania editors. J. Boutillier, D. Hughes, S. Tiffany.

22 Initially, only pastors attended the assembly but in 1893 the laity were also included.

23 It is responsible for the general legislation of the church, but the detailed business of the church is carried out by the following committees:

Committee of Elders, General Purposes Committee, Education Committee, Development Committee, Overseas Mission Committee.

For more details refer to L. Tuimauluga The Mission of the Congregational Church in Samoa in a fa'aSamoa (Samoan Custom) framework, p 47

24 C. Forman The Island Churches of the South Pacific: Emergence in the Twentieth Century p 129

Throughout the period of time from the CCCS's struggle for independence to the present day, the relationship between *fa'aSamoa* (Samoan Culture) and the Church has not been without controversy. The early LMS missionaries' hopes to make Samoans adopt Christianity totally while abandoning all aspects of their *fa'aSamoa* did not eventuate. Samoans who became Christians took on the practices appropriate to their new status by attending services and wearing suitable dress. Still, many times, their obligations to the Church conflicted with their obligations to *fa'aSamoa*.

*Malietoa Vai'inupo* himself blatantly acted contrary to the teachings of the Church when he arranged a political marriage between one of his daughters and a married chief. Although the act was an obvious affront to the teachings about Christian marriage, as a high-ranking chief it was acceptable within *fa'aSamoa*.<sup>25</sup>

In modern times, the dilemma can be in the form of a female deacon or elder [Depending on whether it is in relation to the CCCS or PIC] deciding whether to give a speech of thanks on behalf of the church to visitors or allowing a male deacon or elder the privilege instead. As a deacon or elder, she has the official status to perform such functions as speeches on behalf of the church in church-

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25 Davidson. pp 35 - 36

related matters. However, as a female (regardless of whether she is a *matai* or not), it is deemed appropriate according to *fa'aSamoa*, for a male (ideally a *matai*), to speak on such occasions. Yet, according to the teachings of the Church, all people regardless of age and sex are supposed to be equal in the sight of God.<sup>26</sup>

### Samoans in New Zealand

Samoans have been migrating to New Zealand since the 1800s and according to the 1874 New Zealand Census six Samoans were living permanently in New Zealand.<sup>27</sup> It was not until after the Second World War that the number of migrants coming to New Zealand became significant. To understand some of the motives which compelled Samoans to come to New Zealand, it is necessary to look briefly at the Samoa that they left behind.

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26 While present at a shared cup of tea following a combined church service conducted by the PIC and Catholic Ladies' Fellowship groups', I witnessed an occasion where it was actually inappropriate for a male to speak. This was where the speech of thanks that was to be given was in reply to one made previously by another female NOT another male.

27 D. Pitt & C. MacPherson. Emerging Pluralism p 9

Samoa, [speaking specifically of Western Samoa] has a predominantly agriculturally-based economy and its most important exports are coconut products, cocoa beans, taro (starchy root crop), and bananas.<sup>28</sup> Coconut products include copra (dried meat of the coconut), coconut oil pressed from copra (used in soap and food products) and canned coconut cream (*pe'epe'e*).

During the post World War II years many factors have affected the Samoan economy. These factors are outlined by **Kallen** as providing the ideal circumstances for inducing many Samoans to search for a better life overseas:

*Fluctuations in the world market prices for copra have rendered this export increasingly unreliable as an economic resource; a "population explosion" has contributed to looming land shortages, and job opportunities....overseas have pulled young Samoans....away from agricultural pursuits....*<sup>29</sup>

At the same time, New Zealand needed a reliable source of labour, particularly unskilled, during the late 1960 and early 1970s.<sup>30</sup> Over this period of time therefore, there was a great influx of Pacific Islanders (including Samoans), to

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28 O'Meara. p 20

29 Kallen. p 25

30 B. Duncan 'Christianity: Pacific Island Traditions' p 128 from Religions of New Zealanders ed. P. Donovan.



New Zealand.<sup>31</sup> Better educational opportunities were available to Samoans in New Zealand which provided another important incentive.<sup>32</sup> Migration was also regarded as a source of status. Anyone, (regardless of sex), especially from a village setting, who migrated to New Zealand gained prestige not only for himself or herself but also their family in the sight of their fellow countrymen and women.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, the '*aiga* (family) played a crucial role in migration.<sup>34</sup> Once members of an '*aiga* are established in New Zealand, they are responsible for arranging for their '*aiga* in Samoa to visit, migrate to New Zealand too, or to receive financial support.<sup>35</sup>

#### Pacific Island Population in New Zealand

According to census figures in the 1992 New Zealand Year book the Pacific Island Polynesian population has increased from 61,354 in 1976 to 121,935 in

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31 W. Lamer 'Migration and Female Labour: Samoan Women in New Zealand.' p 36

32 Pitt & MacPherson. p 12

33 A short story by Albert Wendt, 'The Coming of the Whiteman' from Flying Fox in a Freedom Tree deals with this situation.

34 '*Aiga*' is used here to refer not only to the 'immediate' or 'nuclear' family, but also the 'extended' family.

35 For a fuller explanation refer to Kallen's book The Western Samoan Kinship Bridge.

1991.<sup>36</sup> Numerically, Samoans have always been the dominant group. For example, from a total of 94,656 Pacific Island Polynesians living in New Zealand in 1986, 50,199 were Samoans.<sup>37</sup> The large majority of the Pacific Island Polynesian population is resident in the North Island, more particularly in the Auckland and Wellington areas as illustrated by the following table:

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<sup>36</sup> Pacific Island Polynesians comprise of Samoans, Tongans, Cook Islanders, and Niueans only.  
<sup>37</sup> The 1986 census provides the most accurate and complete data on New Zealand's Pacific Island Polynesian population. During that census, actual figures were provided for each island ground which came under the category of Pacific Island Polynesian. The 1991 census only provided figures for the Pacific Island Polynesian population as a whole.

| <b>North Island:</b>                       | 1981              |          | 1986              |          |
|--|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------|
|  | <u>Census No.</u> | <u>%</u> | <u>Census No.</u> | <u>%</u> |
| <b>Auckland</b>                            | 50,613            | 66.6     | 66,432            | 68.2     |
| <b>Wellington</b>                          | 13,692            | 18.0     | 16,326            | 16.8     |
| <b>TOTAL<br/>(North Island)</b>            | 71,703            | 84.6     | 82,758            | 85.0     |
| <b>South Island:</b>                       |                   |          |                   |          |
| <b>Canterbury</b>                          | 2,193             | 2.9      | 3,027             | 3.1      |
| <b>Otago<br/>(incl.<br/>Central/North)</b> | 939               | 1.3      | 1,221             | 1.3      |
| <b>TOTAL:<br/>(South Island)</b>           | 4,242             | 5.6      | 5,505             | 5.7      |
| <b>TOTAL:<br/>(New Zealand)</b>            | 75,966            |          | 97,407            |          |

Some of the reasons for the popularity of the North Island include the greater availability of work, the warmer climate, the geographical closeness of Auckland to the Pacific Islands [a factor that is important when considering the cost of airfares] and also the obvious effects of chain migration.<sup>38</sup> Despite these factors some Samoans did move to the South Island to live.

For those who moved to Christchurch, the slower pace of life and lower concentration of Pacific Islanders appealed to them. Sometimes family commitments can take a toll financially on newly-arrived Samoan migrants.<sup>39</sup>

Living in an area where there may be fewer relatives can take some pressure off them. New migrants cope not only with supporting family members in Samoa but also those already in New Zealand. From 1981 - 1986 the Pacific Island Polynesian population in the Canterbury region increased from 2,193 to 3,027. According to figures put out by the Canterbury Regional Council in 1991, the population stood at 3,936.<sup>40</sup>

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38 C. MacPherson. 'Pacific Islanders' Pacific Viewpoint 32 (2) p 139

39 D. Pitt & C. MacPherson. pp 21 - 49

40 1991 Census of Population & Dwelling Provisional Regional Statistics Canterbury Regional Council.

## Religious Beliefs

When Samoans migrated to New Zealand, they brought with them their strong faith in Christianity. For migrants living in a different country, the church provides not only spiritual solace and guidance, but also social security.<sup>41</sup> The CCCS and PIC churches are the two churches where the majority of Samoans living in New Zealand worship. As the Samoans who initially arrived in New Zealand [during the 1940s and 1950s] came from a strong LMS background, it was only logical that they continued to worship at a Congregational church. During the 1940s, Samoans along with other Pacific Islanders worshipped at the Beresford Street Congregational Church in Auckland.<sup>42</sup>

With the union between the Congregational Union of New Zealand and the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand in 1969, certain significant changes occurred. First of all those Pacific Islanders who had been worshipping at the Beresford Street Church were incorporated into a new national church, the Pacific Islands Presbyterian Church.<sup>43</sup> Today, there are about 30 PIC churches throughout New Zealand from Tokoroa to Invercargill. The large majority of these have multi-ethnic congregations comprising a mixture of Pacific Island

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<sup>41</sup> D. Pitt & C. MacPherson. p 5

<sup>42</sup> Duncan. p 128

<sup>43</sup> For a fuller account refer to U. Nokise's MA thesis 'A History of the Pacific Islanders Congregational Church of New Zealand'.

groups (eg. Samoan, Cook Island and Niuean). Several are dominated by a single ethnic group such as Bluff which is predominantly Cook Island and North Shore Auckland which is predominantly Samoan. The PIC church used in this study, St. Pauls Trinity Pacific Presbyterian Church, includes a substantial number of Europeans together with Samoan, Niuean and Cook Island ethnic groups.<sup>44</sup>

For many Samoans, the PIC still did not provide a close enough environment to that of the Congregational Church that they had been involved with in Samoa. Therefore, a branch of the CCCS was set up in 1963 in Auckland. [Prior to the formation of the PIC church in 1969, the Pacific Islanders worshipping at the Beresford Street church had been part of a Pacific Islanders' Congregational Church]. The running of the CCCS in New Zealand is based on that followed by their mother church in Samoa. Congregations are responsible for the maintenance of and in providing a home for their ministers and the latter were trained at theological institutions back in Samoa (*Malua* College in Western Samoa or *Kanana Fou* in American Samoa). Only the Samoan language is used during the conduct of services, meetings and other church-related matters.

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<sup>44</sup> NOTE: PIC may appear to be an inappropriate label for St. Pauls because it does not have a strictly 'Pacific Islander' congregation. However, for the purposes of this thesis, the definition of 'Pacific Islander' extends to all New Zealanders including 'Europeans'.

The CCCS church used in this study is officially registered as the Christchurch Congregational Christian Church of New Zealand. According to the Minister of this parish, Reverend Tumama Vili, the other branches of the CCCS presently existing in Christchurch are all breakaways and were formed after his parish.<sup>45</sup> Christchurch CCCS was formally established on the 17 April 1966, with originally only five families, a total of 28 people.<sup>46</sup> Today there are a total of 80+ families (nuclear) with Reverend Tumama Vili being the fourth minister to be called to the parish.

St. Pauls Trinity Pacific Presbyterian Church was formally established in 1969 as a result of a union between the Trinity Congregational Church (Worcester Street) and St. Pauls Presbyterian Church (Cashel Street).

The present minister, Reverend Lapana Faletolu, is the third Samoan and Pacific Island minister of the Parish. According to the latest church figures there are a total of 772 members, the large majority of whom are Samoan.

[Rolls Report October 1992].<sup>47</sup>

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45 Personal interview with Rev. Tumama Vili. 18/6/92.

46 From 'Book of Remembrance' EFKS Samoa Christchurch.

47 During the time of writing, the Rolls Clerk was in the process of breaking down membership according to ethnic groups therefore accurate numbers were not yet available.

## CONCLUSION

From pre-Christian times to the present day, religion has been significant in the lives of Samoans. In pre-Christian Samoa, the secular and the religious came into constant contact. The *matai* was not merely the leader and decision-maker of his *'aiga*, he was also the family spiritual mediator on behalf of the gods, responsible for leading the family worship. Preparations for events such as war were incomplete without utilising the assistance of the priests (*taulaitu* or *taulasea*) to invoke the support of *Nafanua* and other war gods.

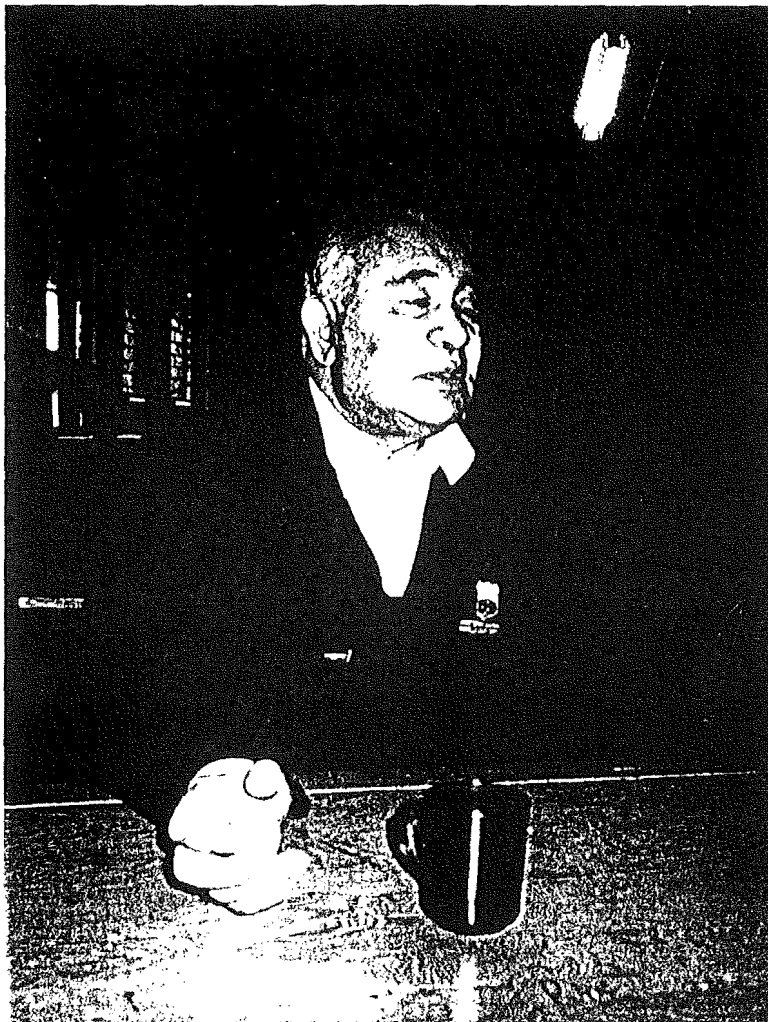
The importance of religion continued with the introduction of Christianity to Samoa. Samoans responded enthusiastically to the new religion and all its associated benefits which were symbolised by European Culture. At the same time they retained many aspects of their own culture. The *matai* remained a key figure socially as the ceremonial head of his family taking on family responsibilities and commitments. He still played an active role in religious life but this time as a deacon in the church and conducted the family worship in the evenings. Sometimes his cultural and religious obligations were a source of conflict as *Malieoa Vai'inupo* himself experienced.

Samoans who migrated to New Zealand brought with them their cultural and religious beliefs as they had experienced them in Samoa. Through their involvement with the Church on their arrival in New Zealand they were



acknowledging the fact that Christianity would still remain valid to them even in a foreign land. It provided both spiritual and cultural support, an environment where Samoan migrants could socialise and promote aspects of *fa'aSamoa*. As these early migrants settled in New Zealand the children that they raised were instilled with the same cultural and religious beliefs that they were brought up with. These beliefs were incorporated in the concept of *fa'aSamoa*. Through the eyes of both New Zealand and Samoan-born and/or raised respondents this study attempts to see how *fa'aSamoa* influences their participation in the Church.

## CHAPTER TWO



## THE MINISTER

"O le Ao o Faalupega"<sup>1</sup>

Within the context of Samoan village life, probably no other figure dominates religious life more than the Minister.<sup>2</sup> During public functions and official engagements, he is politely referred to by the title of '*le ao o faalupega*', a title that places him above all the chiefs and orators of Samoa. The Ministers are regarded as the representatives of God, and the Church, being an extension of that role, is ranked above *fa'aSamoa*. A study concerning the 'church' and '*fa'aSamoa*' would therefore be incomplete if it did not include such a powerful key figure as the 'Minister'.

### Historical Background

After the acceptance by *Malietoa* of the LMS missionaries in 1830, the Samoans responded enthusiastically to the message of Christianity they brought. On returning to Samoa, John Williams recognised the urgent need for sending more missionaries there:

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<sup>1</sup> Literally 'the gathering of all chiefly and orator titles'. When used in reference to the Minister it implies that he is the culmination of all chiefly and orator titles of Samoa. In other words, he has the pinnacle of all titles as the Minister.

<sup>2</sup> Regardless of denomination ie. Methodist, Congregational etc.

A very strong wish to be instructed in the principles of Christianity does exist. The opportunity ought to be embraced immediately....No time ought to be delayed. Runaway sailors are getting very numerous.....Some are pretending to teach and baptize the people while their conduct is vile in the extreme. Others are doing all in their power to poison the minds of the people against religion altogether...<sup>3</sup>

In 1836, six missionaries were sent by the headquarters in London to Samoa and they were distributed throughout the main islands except *Manu'a*. Through their efforts, LMS missionary activity in Samoa rapidly increased and by the year 1840, a printing press was in use and a network of mission stations established throughout Samoa.<sup>4</sup> However, the missionaries knew that to ensure the continual growth of LMS activity in Samoa, more time and effort would have to be devoted to raising the standard of education beyond an elementary level.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore the first steps were taken to establish a theological training institution with the purchase of unoccupied land at Malua, on the north-west coast of Upolu, about 11 miles west of Apia.<sup>6</sup> In September 1844, the Malua Institution

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3 R. Moyle The Samoan Journals of John Williams 1830 and 1832 p 281

4 S.W. Tiffany 'The Politics of Denominational Organisation in Samoa' in Mission, Church, and Sect in Oceania p 430

5 V. Carson For further details refer to Samoan mission Seminary 1844 - 84 p 32

6 R.J. Crawford The Lotu and the fa'aSamoa p 230

was established with the Reverend George Turner and Charles Hardie in charge. At that particular point in time Malua was the first institution of higher education in Samoa and for many years to come it maintained a high level of education. In a status-conscious society such as Samoa, Malua added a new class of educated elite to the Samoan social structure.<sup>7</sup>

In the early years of the institution potential students for Malua were carefully selected by the missionaries. To be eligible for selection, potential students had to be literate and able to show a genuine interest in Christianity.<sup>8</sup> Further, the missionaries accepted only students from chiefly families into Malua (mainly for social reasons).<sup>9</sup> It was a real privilege to be accepted to Malua in the early years especially, only the brightest students, the creme of the scholars, went there. Only in recent decades has Malua been open to all Samoan males for training.<sup>10</sup> Today, potential students for the ministry are still carefully selected and all undertake various procedures before they can enter Malua. Initially approval for an applicant's name to become a candidate for Malua had to be achieved at both the local and national level. The following diagram illustrates the various levels in the hierarchy of the congregational Christian Church of Samoa:

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<sup>7</sup> J.W. Davidson Samoa mo Samoa p 37

<sup>8</sup> Carson p 190

<sup>9</sup> *ibid* p 191: "By accepting members of chiefly families into the Institution the missionaries sought to avoid the raising up of an elitist group that would come into conflict with the established community leadership".

<sup>10</sup> Since its establishment in 1844 Malua has only accepted male candidates for ministry training and this still applies today

**Church Structure** (CCCS)

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Fono Tele   | (General Assembly)   |
| Tofiga Tele | (District Meeting)   |
| Matagaluega | (District - comprised of Pulega, and the size of each Matagaluega depends on the number of Pulega within that Matagaluega) |
| Pulega      | (Sub-district - is based on the social as of Political unit of the Itumalo)  |
| Au lotu     | (Local congregation - is based on the village, thus a village church).   |

In order to be accepted as a candidate for ministry, certain areas are considered. These include his "call" to the ministry, church background and educational attainment. Church background relates to the extent of church involvement by both the applicant and his family. Educational attainment is an important indicator of the applicant's ability to cope with the entrance exam and further study.

Once an individual is accepted as a candidate for the ministry he begins to study and prepare for the entrance exam to Malua. Throughout the duration of this procedure, the candidate is under the close scrutiny of his Minister and congregation. Candidates are given the topics for the entrance exam at least

and village. Throughout the duration of his study at Malua, they will be responsible for supporting him financially, physically and spiritually. If he does something to cause his expulsion from Malua before his training is completed, this will bring great shame to his family and all those who have supported him. However, if he succeeds in completing his training, his graduation will be a source of great celebration for him and his family and village.

Once his training is completed, the newly qualified graduate is not automatically assigned to a parish. Instead he waits for an individual village to "call" him to be their Minister. Initially a small delegation from the village consisting of orators and deacons approach him and after a formal presentation of food to him, they will make their request known. The Minister acknowledges the requests and asks for adequate time during which he will consider his decision whether to accept it or not. If he chooses to accept the call, then certain customary obligations are required of him in relation to his new parish. This includes the formal presentation to the village (of his new parish) of food:

Before, the food presented consisted mainly of many pigs, beef, fish, chickens, turtles, taro and yams. But today, it frequently takes the form of tinned fish, tinned meat, kegged salt beef, bread and biscuits. In addition there will be pigs, fresh meat, fish and taro from the new pastor's family.<sup>12</sup>

A formal *kava* ceremony (traditional welcome ceremony), is held by the village to officially welcome their new Minister and an induction service which is held by the elder-pastor of the sub-district. All of these actions are a confirmation that the Minister and his new congregation are about to enter a special relationship.

The relationship between the Minister and his congregation involves a set of mutual obligations. The congregation respects and provides for all the Minister's physical needs and in return the Minister acts as spiritual father who instructs, advises and comforts them during life crises.<sup>13</sup> To the outside observer, the relationship appears to be a biased one favouring the Minister who seems to be elevated to an almost God-like position. Only the best of

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12 L. Tanielu A Study of the Ministry of the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa and the Influence of Social Organisation, Traditions and Custom p 24

13 F. Ngan-Woo fa'aSamoa: the World of Samoans p 31



everything (eg. food/fine mats), is given to him while the congregation either settle for whatever is left over or simply do without. To the Samoan observer, the Minister was merely being accorded the proper respect due to him as the representative of God.<sup>14</sup> This relationship is referred to and embodied in the concept of '*feagaiga*'.

This chapter attempts to explore more fully this concept by focusing on the original *feagaiga* relationship that existed between a brother and sister. Various aspects of this relationship are reflected in the present relationship that exists between the Minister and his congregation. The intention here is to provide a description of the processes at work in the relationship between the Samoan Minister and his congregation. It should be mentioned at this point that for the Samoans who are members of the PIC and CCCS churches in New Zealand, their attitudes towards, and the treatment of the Ministers, are very similar to the situation in Samoa.

Many respondents when asked during the course of my research to identify a feature that they thought was peculiar to *fa'aSamoa* gave as an example the special treatment given to their Minister:

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14 J. Garrett To Live Among the Stars p 124

Samoans think that a Minister is God....palagis [sic] feel Ministers [are] no different from any other person.

Ministers are not as specially [sic] treated in the Palagi way whereas they are in the Samoan.

The association of the Minister (a church figure), with *fa'aSamoa* highlights the fact that many times the line between *fa'aSamoa* and the church is an uncertain one. For many Samoans (especially New Zealand-born and/or raised), there is ignorance or a misconception of the reason for the unique status given to the Minister. This chapter hopes to explain the Minister-parish relationship by referring to how the original *feagaiga* relationship between brother and sister in Samoan society functioned.

#### 1. Defining 'feagaiga'

As already mentioned, the relationship between a sister and brother in *fa'aSamoa* is described as 'feagaiga'. The term is also applied by a brother to refer directly to his sister (eg. '*Lota tuafafine le feagaiga*, 'My sister the....'). By looking at some of the dictionary definitions that have been used to describe *feagaiga* over the years, it is interesting to see just how its meaning has evolved:

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| Author of Dictionary | Year | Definition:   |
|----------------------|------|---|
| <hr/>                |      |   |
| Rev. George Pratt    | 1862 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. An established relationship between different parties, as between brothers and sisters and their children...Also between chiefs and their tulafale.</li><li>2. An agreement, a covenant.<br/>A lately adopted meaning.</li></ol>   |
| Prof. G. Milner      | 1966 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Agreement, contract, treaty.</li><li>2. Special relationship (a kind of perpetual kinship) between two kin-groups (tamafafine and tamatane) of greater or lesser extent, who regard themselves as being the descendants of a woman (in the case of the tamafafine) and of her brother (in the case of the tamatane)</li><li>3. Descendants of a woman (from the point of view of her brother and his descendants).</li><li>4. Covenant, testament....</li><li>5. Polite usage (i) Pastor<br/>(ii) R.C. Catechist</li><li>6. ....a le sa'o: Polite term for 'tamafafine'.</li></ol> |
| R.W. Allardice       | 1985 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Covenant, testament, agreement (pol.)</li><li>2. Minister of religion.</li></ol>   |

The definition of *feagaiga* as the relationship between a brother and sister has gradually lost significance as can be seen from the table. A primary reason for this which was pointed out to me by one informant was the change in gender roles in Samoan society. Traditionally, the roles of the sexes were specified: men were usually occupied with heavier, dirtier work further away from the household context. Women did the lighter, cleaner tasks either within or near the household context.<sup>15</sup> These gender roles were reflected in the brother-sister relationship; the brother had the more arduous role in serving his sister who enjoyed an easier life. However, times have changed and in contemporary Samoan society, gender roles are more flexible. Samoan women along with their male counterparts are excelling in all spheres of work. This has affected the significance of such a relationship as the brother-sister *feagaiga* which is based on specifying the individual roles of the sexes.

In 1862 it was the primary definition for the term, in 1985 it fails to even get a mention at all. As a New Zealand-born and raised Samoan, I realised that I was more familiar with the application of the term to the Minister within the 'church' context. While interviewing one of my informants I asked why it was I rarely heard a brother referring to his sister as a *feagaiga* when together. I was quickly and sharply told that to actually refer to someone as *feagaiga* in ordinary conversation was absurd.

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15 P. Schoeffel Daughters of Sina Vol. 1 p 36

A brother did not have to use the term '*feagaiga*' to refer directly to his sister in order for the relationship to exist. The relationship is demonstrated and established by their roles in society and their behaviour towards each other. However, my informant did point out a situation where it was appropriate for a woman to deliberately refer to herself as a *feagaiga*. This was a situation where the informant and her elder brother were in the middle of a heated argument when her brother swore at her. She immediately responded by saying, "You can't talk to me like that, I am your *feagaiga*". In other words, the relationship between a sister and brother was ideally based on respect and courtesy towards each other and this included the use of polite language. By swearing at his sister, the informant's brother was showing a blatant disregard for their relationship, and so it was necessary for him to be reminded of this by his sister.

## 2. Sister-Brother

An illuminating phrase commonly used by Samoans when referring to the relationship of a sister to her brother is '*o le tuafafine o le io-i-mata o lona tuagane*' (the sister is the pupil of her brother's eye). During the course of my research it became quite familiar to me as it was constantly used by many of the people I spoke with. Obviously, the sister was as important to her brother just as the pupil was important to the human eye. However, it was not until after I heard the following account that I really began to understand just how precious a sister was in terms of *fa'aSamoa*.

A young woman was returning home to her village from the plantation when she was raped. Her brother who had been on his way to meet her was soon alerted of the incident along with the whole village. Immediately, he took a machete and went after the rapist whom he stabbed several times. It was only due to the intervention of the village that the rapist's life was saved. The brother was eventually imprisoned for his actions.

An additional factor that aggravated the situation was that the rapist was married to a woman in the village

The relevant point to note is that the brother immediately took action to avenge his sister's rape. According to my informant, at such times a brother knows (or should know) his appropriate duty and should not hesitate to take action even if it meant taking his own life. Any other alternative would mean disgrace not only for the sister and her immediate family but the extended family as well.

**If something happens to tarnish the sister's reputation then it is up to her brothers.....to avenge what has occurred. Otherwise it is a *luma* (shame/humiliation/loss of face) if they don't avenge what has happened to their sister.**

The reputation of the sister reflects that of her family. It was the duty of the brothers to protect their sister's good reputation and ensure their immediate and extended family's reputation was maintained. Where a sister's reputation had been jeopardised (eg. rape/slander) then it was the duty of her brother(s) to avenge this and in the process, restore respect to the family's reputation.

This illustrates a key dichotomy which is expressed in the concept of *feagaiga* between what is 'sacred' and 'moral' (represented by the sister), and that which is 'profane' (represented by the brother).

**'Feagaiga' expresses the idealised principles by which order exists in Samoan society at all levels of organisation. It contrasts sacred, moral ideological principles with utilitarian functional or "profane" human actions, in a social contract by which the former imposes order and dignity upon the latter.<sup>16</sup>**

The relationship is a complementary one with the brother serving his sister through his protection of her and his provision of all her basic needs. He gives her the best of everything whether this relates to food, articles of clothing or a place to sleep. In exchange for his services, if his sister's reputation remains intact, she assures both dignity and respect for himself and the whole family. If she eventually marries a high chief or especially a Minister (quite a sought after match by Samoans), then she is responsible for bringing great pride to not only her whole family but also her entire village.

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16      *ibid* p 287



At this point it may be appropriate to look a little more closely at some of the characteristics of the brother-sister relationship:

- (1) the rendering of respectful service by the brother to his sister, whom he should serve at meals, eating only when she has finished;
- (2) avoidance of casual or lighthearted conversation, particularly when it includes bawdy banter or references to boy or girl friends;
- (3) rigid separation of sleeping quarters, the sister traditionally sleeping in the large *fale tele* 'round house';
- (4) protection of the sister by the brother from the sexual aggressiveness of other boys, often to the extent of stoning or beating a would-be suitor caught with the girl;
- (5) a mutual air of suspicion, sometimes bordering on hostility, that often accompanies any relationship of formalised respect'.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> B. Shore 'Incest Prohibitions and the Logic of Power in Samoa'  
in Journal of the Polynesian Society Vol. 85 No. 2 June 1976

The main features that are brought out in these points are 'mutual respect' and 'avoidance'. There is an avoidance of inappropriate language and physical proximity. All contact between brother and sister appears to be quite formal and respectful.

To a lesser extent, the same attitude and behaviour described above, extends to the relationship of the brother to other female members from his family of the same generation. I will describe two situations to illustrate this point which both involved the relationship between cousins. The first situation occurred during a visit to Western Samoa and provides a perfect example of the fourth characteristic (ie. 'protection of the sister by the brothers from the sexual aggressiveness of other boys').

A dance was held in my mother's village (*Ga'utavai*) one night which I attended with one of my male cousins. At that time my cousin was a student at Samoa Teachers' Training College and it happened that one of his female classmates (from another village), was also at the dance. During the course of the evening my cousin and this girl were both seen talking together by her male cousins. Thinking that my cousin had 'dishonourable intentions' towards her, they attempted to get him alone in order to beat him up. For the girl concerned, this was her cousins' way of protecting her honour and that of her family.

The other situation concerned the more serious crime of rape. In this case the victim was of high status in the village, she was the village '*taupou*' (ceremonial village maiden, usually the daughter of one of the high chiefs of the village). After the incident both the families of the victim and the rapist were reconciled according to Samoan protocol through the means of an '*ifoga*' (formal apology).<sup>18</sup> Two of the victim's male cousins who lived in another village further away from where the incident occurred did not hear about the incident until after the *ifoga*. Despite this fact, as soon as they heard about the incident they immediately went to their cousin's village to look for the rapist and his family. One took a shotgun with him to shoot anyone who tried to stop them while the other one burnt down the houses belonging to the offender and his family.

In both situations it was not the brothers, but the cousins of the girls who were involved. Part of the reason for this relates to another aspect of the brother-sister relationship, ie. the close bond which exists between them is carried on through their descendants. The brother's descendants are referred to as '*tamatane*' while those of his sister's are known as '*tamafafine*'. A family member's right to refer either to their status as '*tamafine*' or '*tamatane*' becomes important when family chiefly titles are at issue. Like the relationship between the brother and sister, it involves an exchange of mutual respect and support.

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18 Ngan-Woo p 43

### 3. Minister-Congregation

From the previous section it can be discerned that the *feagaiga* relationship between a sister and brother is one that naturally exists between the two from their birth and right throughout their lives. In relation to a Minister and his congregation, the *feagaiga* that exists between them takes on the character of a formal contract which is made explicit by the carrying out of certain obligations. When a Minister initially begins his ministry with a parish both parties enter into a *feagaiga* relationship. As a sign of their willingness and sincerity to honour their *feagaiga* both the Minister and his new congregation carry out certain obligations towards each other. Large amounts of food are presented by the Minister to the village on his arrival. The village holds a traditional *kava* ceremony to officially welcome their new Minister during which he is presented with the first cup of *kava* (or *'ava* as it is known in Samoa). The first and the last cup of *kava* are presented to the most important titular chiefs present.<sup>19</sup> By giving the Minister the first cup, the village are acknowledging his high status by according him the same respect as a high chief.

This is followed by an induction service which is led by the *toeaina* (elder pastor) of the *pulega* (sub-district), and a feast. Finally, the village present the

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<sup>19</sup>      *ibid* p 41

*sua*, a presentation of cooked food consisting of a large pig, a fowl, a bundle of taro, a coconut and ie. *toga* (fine meat) to all the special guests and dignitaries including their new Minister. Once the *feagaiga* has been established, the Minister is primarily referred to by his parish as '*Le susuga o le fa'afeagaiga*' (Your excellency our covenant). A congregation will only use the term *fa'afeagaiga* if referring to their own Minister. *Feagaiga* is used to refer generally to any Minister other than their own. His real name is no longer used unless it is within the context of his own family.<sup>20</sup>

In the same way that a contract or agreement is sealed by some form of action (whether it is a handshake or the signing of a document), so the *feagaiga* between the Minister and congregation is confirmed by the whole ritual described above. The way in which a Minister accepts his call to a village and fulfils the social obligations attached to it can affect the treatment that he will receive there. Through the lavish presentation of food by the Minister to the village he demonstrates his own personal and family status. If he fails to provide adequate food, he will cause dissatisfaction among the chiefs and orators of the village and so may not receive their full support in his ministry.<sup>21</sup>

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20 NOTE: The same applied to him when he became an *a'oa'o* (theological student). He was no longer referred to by his real name but was instead called '*Le susuga o le ali'i a'oa'o*' (Your excellency the theological student).

21 Tanielu p 24

Generally, the *feagaiga* between the Minister and his village involve a mutual understanding that in religious matters the Minister is the authority while secular matters remain the priority of the village chiefs and orators:

**This is based on the understanding that the clergyman will be treated as though he was the highest ranking *ali'i* (chief) of the village and that his congregation will serve him, care for his needs and obey him in spiritual matters. It places a reciprocal obligation upon him to remain aloof from village politics other than those of direct concern to his ministry.<sup>22</sup>**

The congregation are responsible for supplying the Minister with food, contributing monthly for his personal expenses (*alofa*), and donating annually for the upkeep of his house (*fa'amati*). In relation to food, families take turns in providing the Minister with a daily supply although on Sundays every household is expected to provide him with a basket of food. If a family receives a gift of food then part of this (if not at all) is given to the Minister.<sup>23</sup> Where a family are fortunate to receive a good catch while fishing, they can be fined by the village if a portion is not given to the Minister's family. The point to note here is that it is not just any portion of food but the best food that is allocated to the Minister.

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<sup>22</sup> Schoeffel p 286

<sup>23</sup> According to one informant, parcels of food sent by relatives outside of Samoa following Cyclone Ofa in 1990. Regardless of size, part was always set aside for Minister.

To a large extent many of the characteristics of the *feagaiga* relationship between a sister and brother are replicated here in the Minister-congregation *feagaiga*. Metaphorically speaking the Minister represents the 'sister' and the congregation relate to him as a 'brother'. The same idea of utmost respect for a sister is expressed towards a Minister by his congregation by giving him the best of everything whether it is food or accommodation. At all times only polite and courteous language is used when addressing a Minister. [In some villages a person can be fined for using inappropriate language].

The sacred-profane dichotomy is also present and is even more accentuated in the Minister-congregation *feagaiga*. As a representative of God whose sole responsibility is the spiritual well-being of his congregation the Minister is aptly associated with all that is sacred. Similarly, the congregation represent the 'profane' as the more active in their relationship which is concerned with secular matters. Both complement one another with the dignity and honour of the congregation and the village being reflected in their Minister. This point is clearly brought out in a well-known Samoan phrase '*E mamalu le aganuu i le lotu*' (The Church enhances the dignity of culture).

Ideally, the Minister is restricted to matters concerning the Church while matters pertaining to *fa'aSamoa* are left to the *matai* (chiefs). In reality, there are certain occasions during which the Minister is either willingly or unwillingly forced to intervene in apparent *fa'aSamoa* matters. I will relate two occasions both of

which involve life and death situations and where a Minister's influence overrode that of the *matai* (chief). The first involves the significance attached to the Minister's house and property.

In most Samoan villages today, the Minister's house is still the largest and most handsome looking.<sup>24</sup> Part of a congregation's responsibility includes maintaining the general upkeep of the Minister's house and contributing annually to a specific offering which caters for this very purpose (referred to as '*fa'amati*'). According to one CCCS Minister I interviewed, the Minister's house was characteristically a private and peaceful place. Any stranger to a village was always directed to the Minister's house for there he or she would be well-cared for as the Minister's guest.<sup>25</sup> The Minister's house symbolised a safe, neutral place in the village accessible not only to strangers but also people from the village too.

If the life of someone in the village was in any danger from a person or persons who wanted to kill him the only place where he could run to and be assured of safety regardless of the crime, was the Minister's house. Only there could the assailants fail to harm him because on entering the Minister's house he immediately came under the care of the Minister. The *feagaiga* relationship

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24 L. Tuimauluga The Mission of the Congregational Church in Samoa in a *fa'aSamoa* (Samoan Custom) framework p 56

25 Interview with Reverend Rudolph Stanley 17 December 1992



between the Minister and the village then come into play. As their *feagaiga* the Minister was treated with respect and this extended also to his home (and property). In a situation therefore where a person was seeking refuge, the Minister's house became sacred. If his assailants dared to pursue him still, they would be violating the sanctity of the Minister's house. The wider implication is that they were disrespectful to the Minister himself and the whole *feagaiga* relationship that existed between him and the village.<sup>26</sup>

On some occasions, the Minister may choose to become more directly involved even at the expense of his own life. The following real life incident occurred about 40 years ago and illustrates such an occasion:

A group of men were working on the road when a truck passed by full of girls from the same village. One of the workmen happened to come from the neighbouring village to that of the girls. Jokingly he called out and referred to them as '*teine o le lafu mamoe*' (literally 'the girls of the flock of sheep'). According to *fa'aSamoa*, the phrase was extremely degrading and insulting. As soon as the girls returned to their village they informed them of what the man had said. Immediately the whole village blackened

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26 When I asked some informants whether a person could also seek refuge in the church the general response was one of incredulity. The church was merely a 'building' and no one could stop assailants from pursuing a person there. On the other hand, the Minister's house was where the Minister himself lived and this was eterrant enough for even the most ambitious assailant.

their faces ('*Lafo le tagava*') and went to find the man concerned. They destroyed everything that belonged to the man's family including animals, goods, plantations. The man himself was beaten, tied up like a pig and prepared to be ceremoniously burnt. However, through the intervention of several Ministers the young man's life was spared.

There have been numerous situations where a Minister has thrown himself on a potential victim in order to save their life. Normally the Minister's intervention was adequate enough to save the victim's life because of his status as the *feagaiga* to the village. The gravity of the above incident is illustrated by the fact that it took the intervention of several Ministers to save the victim's life. The man had committed a most serious crime in *fa'aSamoa* for which he was going to be punished according to *fa'aSamoa*. Yet in the end result, the Minister's authority over-rode any decision made by the chiefs and orators of the wronged village.

## CONCLUSION

Today, the figure of the Minister is still regarded with respect and to some extent "awe" by the majority of Samoans. [Regardless of denomination or whether they lived in Samoa or outside of Samoa]. A certain mystique surrounds the Minister, part of which stems from the fact that he is regarded as the representative of God. For a long time in Samoa the Minister was also the most highly-educated person. More importantly, he was associated with the concept of *feagaiga*.

The origins of this concept relate to the special relationship between a sister and brother which was known as *feagaiga*. It was characterised by a formalised respect between the two which included a strict separation and avoidance of inappropriate language and behaviour. Each party had a specific role in the relationship with the brother rendering service to his sister who was entrusted with the dignity and good reputation of her family. The relationship was a complementary one involving the mutual exchange of obligations.

The sister-brother *feagaiga* is unique in *fa'aSamoa* and all other similar relationships are merely extensions of this. These include the relationship between the two types of *matai* in *fa'aSamoa*, the *ali'i* (chief) and *tulafale* (orator)

and of course the Minister-congregation relationship.<sup>27</sup> Many of the characteristics from the original sister-brother *feagaiga* relationship have been transferred to the relationship between the Minister and his congregation. When a Minister accepts a call to a village congregation they both enter into a *feagaiga* which is confirmed by a mutual exchange of food and gifts. From that point on the Minister is addressed as and becomes that congregation's *feagaiga*. All their everyday relations with the Minister are affected by his status as their *feagaiga*. He was to be treated with formal respect at all times and villagers could be fined for using any insulting language or behaviour towards him.

Through the use of his status as the *feagaiga* the Minister can intervene in matters relating to *fa'aSamoa* and over-ride or affect any decisions. In the same way too, a sister has the power to veto any decision made by her brother regarding family *matai* titles.<sup>28</sup> As illustrated in this chapter a Minister's direct appeal to save a life is respected even if the victim was guilty according to *fa'aSamoa*. The extent to which a Minister was respected as a *feagaiga* extended even to his home and property. A deliberate violation of the Minister's house was equal to a violation of the Minister himself.

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<sup>27</sup> The *Ali'i* and *Tulafale* share a relationship of mutual exchange and obligations similar to the brother-sister *feagaiga*. As the *tulafale* the 'profane' aspect of their relationship through rendering service to the *ali'i* (eg. making speeches on his behalf). In contrast, the *ali'i* represents the dignity and reputation of his *tulafale* and whole 'aiga (family).

<sup>28</sup> Crawford, p 364.

Unfortunately, it is widely believed by some that many of the clergy have abused and still continue to abuse their position as *feagaiga*. In the same way, many people have failed to attribute appropriate respect to the clergy in view of their role as men of God. Today it is widely believed that ultimately the characteristics of the original *feagaiga* as it existed between a sister and brother have become perverted in the Minister-congregation relationship.

## CHAPTER THREE



## CHIEFS, DEACONS AND ELDERS

"O pou tu toa a le galuega"<sup>1</sup>

If the 'Minister' is the ultimate authority in the church then it is the '*matai*' who is the authority in *fa'aSamoa*. He is the main decision-maker in Samoan society both on an individual and a collective basis. As an individual, he is the appointed or elected head of his '*aiga*' ('family', both immediate and extended), and in matters related to the welfare of the '*aiga*' his decision is crucial. He is also part of the body of *matai* (chief) that comprise his village and collectively they make decisions regarding the welfare of the village as a whole in the '*Fono-ale-nu'u*' (village council).<sup>2</sup> In pre-Christian Samoa, the *matai* carried authority in both the 'secular' and 'religious' spheres. To a large extent Christianity effectively limited that authority by transferring much of his religious duties and associated status to the Minister. However, the *matai* was able (and still is) to influence church matters through the position of 'Deacon'.

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1 Literally means 'the strong posts of the [Church's] work'. Refers to the two main posts which support a Samoan *fale* (house). Usually they are the biggest of all the posts in the *fale*. In the same way, the deacons and elders provide strong support and leadership for the work of the church.

2 L. Tuimauluga The Mission of the Congregational Church in Samoa in a *fa'aSamoa* (Samoan Custom) framework p 40

### The Matai - 'Secular' role

Generally there are two types of *matai* recognised in *fa'aSamoa*; those who possess the title and status of an *ali'i* (chief) or a *tulafale* (orator). *Ali'i* titles are usually ranked higher than *tulafale* titles with sacred origins linking back to the creator god, *Tagaloa-a-lagi*. *Tulafale* are primarily responsible for serving the *ali'i* and for speaking on their behalf during ceremonial occasions.<sup>3</sup>

Although there are women *matai* today, the majority tend to be men. *Matai* titles (*fuafa*) are the property of the '*aiga* and all '*aiga* in Samoa have their own number of titles. Therefore the right to elect or appoint a *matai* belongs to the '*aiga* as a whole which can include both members related by blood, marriage or adoption.<sup>4</sup>

Only after there has been a consensus achieved among the members of an '*aiga* can a *matai* title be conferred. Once a consensus has been reached the title is officially conferred on the appointed member at an investiture ceremony or *saofai*.<sup>5</sup> This basically involves a *kava* ceremony during which the village *matai* officially welcome and acknowledge the new *matai* by serving him

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3 For fuller details refer to M. Meleisea The Making of Modern Samoa especially Chapter One 'Traditional Authority'.

4 NOTE: A *matai* has status because of his title ie. the higher the title, the higher the respect accorded to the title holder.

5 F. Ngan-Woo Fa'aSamoa: the World of Samoans p 35: "Generally speaking eligibility to become a *matai* or a chief is through *tautua* (service) and then kinship connections."



with the first cup of *kava*. In return, the family of the new *matai* provide food for the village.<sup>6</sup> A similar ceremony takes place in relation to the arrival of a new Minister in the village.

A *matai* title entitles the holder to certain privileges not only in relation to his family but also the village. He is officially recognised as the elected head of his family, 'the fountain-head to whom all ceremonial recognition of the status of his family is by right due'.<sup>7</sup> In practical terms, all the members of the '*aiga* treat him with appropriate respect as their *matai*. They support him with food, finances on labour and by honouring the decisions that he makes:

They must be prepared to respond in whatever way the name of the family desires to be recognised. They must also contribute for his share when special occasions and ceremonies invite co-operations and communal participation.<sup>8</sup>

At a wider level, the *matai* has the privilege of being a member of the '*Fono-ale-nu'u*' (village council), which is the main decision-making and disciplinary body

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6 J.W. Davidson *Samoa mo Samoa* p 23

7 L. Tanielu *A Study of the Ministry of the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa and the Influence of Social Organisation, Traditions and Customs* p 26

8 *ibid*

in the village. It should be noted that the village council can influence matters pertaining both to the local village level and the national level; eg. support for or against a local MP during an election.

Along with his privileges of course, the matai has certain obligations himself towards his family and the village. His primary responsibilities include the administration of family property (in the form of land or wealth) and the protection of family members.

**.....allocating land for residence and cultivation, maintaining peaceable relations among coresidents of the estate, protecting corporate property, and assessing goods and services for group participation in ceremonial redistributions, village projects.....<sup>9</sup>**

He provides the leadership for maintaining a strong, supportive family who in turn contribute to the welfare of the whole village.

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<sup>9</sup> S.W. Tiffany 'The Politics of Denominational Organisation in Samoa' in Mission, Church, and Sect in Oceania p 434

### The Matai - 'religious' role

Although there was a class of priests (*taulaitu* and *taulasea*) in pre-Christian Samoa, many priestly functions were incorporated into the chiefly role of the *matai*. He was the family mediator with the household gods and was responsible for leading evening worship and prayers.<sup>10</sup> His religious role related to the belief that the *matai* were descendants of the gods from whom they received their authority. Higher ranking *ali'i* in particular were believed to be sacred and in possession of supernatural powers which were used to their advantage.<sup>11</sup> One example of a *matai* that abused his authority was *Lei'ataua Tonumaipe'a Tamafaiga* (who was killed prior to Williams' arrival in Samoa). *Tamafaiga* was described by John Williams in his 1830 Journal as a "devil chief" reputed to possess supernatural powers:

....it was believed that the spirit of the Devil rested in him and that he had the power to inflict disease and death. He was consulted as an oracle or prophet on all important occasions and his decisions were always law. He possessed no power as a chief but all the chiefs paid a kind of homage and brought presents to him....Property, pigs and all the women on the islands were at his command.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Refer to Chapter One 'Western Samoans and Christianity' p 4.

<sup>11</sup> Meleisea p 9 "A high chief could place a *sa* (interdict) on any land or crop within the territory in which his authority was recognised, and it was taken for granted that breaking such an order would result in supernatural punishment.

<sup>12</sup> R. Moyle The Samoan Journals of John Williams 1830 and 1832 p 129

*Tamafaiga* was eventually assassinated when he attempted to take a chief's wife (although some versions claim that it was a '*taupou*', ceremonial virgin and not a chief's wife). Even after his death his remains were regarded as sacred by many Samoans.<sup>13</sup>

### Arrival of Christianity

From the very beginning, the *matai* played a key role in the decision for Samoa to replace their old religion with Christianity. On his arrival in Samoa John Williams was aware (from past experience on other Pacific islands), that for the successful acceptance of Christianity in Samoa, he needed to win the support of the chiefs. Once the chiefs accepted Christianity as their own religion then their example would be replicated by the rest of the population. Williams discovered, however, that the authority of the chiefs in Samoa differed significantly to that of those chiefs that he had experienced previously on other Pacific islands.

Unlike other islands such as Tahiti, there was no centralised authority in Samoa. Instead there were principal political divisions led in groups of powerful *matai*.<sup>14</sup> This meant that even if the conversion of a local *matai* was achieved, it would not necessarily guarantee a mass conversion of the Samoan population.

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13      *ibid.* p 131

14      Meleisea, p 1

Fortunately for Williams with the help of *Fauea* (Samoan companion), and the timely death of *Tamafaiga*, he was able to win the support and protection of *Malietoa Vai'inupo* shortly after his arrival to Samoa in 1830. At that particular point in time, Malietoa happened to be the most powerful *matai* in Samoa. In principle he had the ability and force to become virtual 'king' of Samoa.<sup>15</sup>

It would probably be fair to say that for *Malietoa* the primary motives for his decision were material rather than spiritual. By accepting Christianity he would gain access to the European world which included European goods and materials. Furthermore the association with missionaries provided a source of great prestige for himself and his family.<sup>16</sup> Many times the missionaries found their own principles were jeopardised in order to maintain the patronage of *matai*.

The decision for Samoans to become Christian was not taken lightly but was carefully debated by the *matai* in the village council. Williams records the arguments put forward by one *matai*:

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15 Davidson. pp 33 - 34

16 *ibid.*

Now I conclude that the God who has given to his white worshippers these valuable things must be wiser than our gods, for they have not given the like to us. We all want these articles; and my proposition is that the God who gave them should be our God.<sup>17</sup>

There were no idols or temples in Samoa to be desecrated in the event of a conversion to Christianity. However, certain species of animals, birds and fish were regarded as incarnations of ancestral, village or district gods and Samoans were forbidden to eat them. Once the decision was made by a village to become Christian they would assemble in the presence of a missionary and would cook and eat those creatures that had been sacred to them.<sup>18</sup> Usually one person was appointed from each family to eat the sacred creature and if no misfortune befell them then the rest of the family would follow suit. That person was usually the *matai* and in the case of *Malietoa's* own family, he himself undertook the test.

For *Malietoa* and other *matai* Christianity effectively limited the authority that they had earlier experienced in pre-Christian Samoa. Many of the sacred or god-like powers that they had been associated with and which had been abused

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17 Tiffany. p 429

18 M. Meleisea Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa p 54

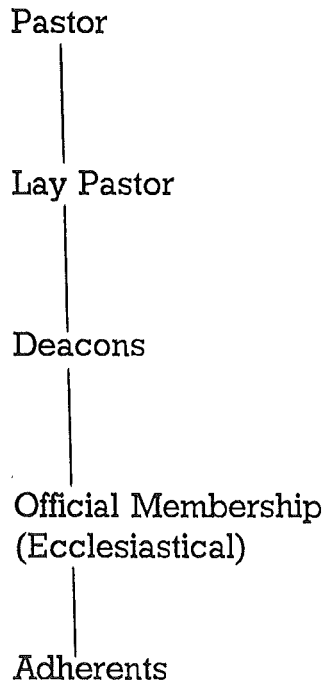
by them ceased to exist.<sup>19</sup> His priestly function and the status related with it was transferred to the Minister.<sup>20</sup> The authority of the *matai* was still believed to be divinely-given but by the Christian God who had an established code of behaviour for everyone.<sup>21</sup> Christianity had a levelling effect on Samoan society and succeeded in dispelling some of the religious aura surrounding the *matai* by shortening the distance between him and the ordinary Samoan. Aspects of the *matai's* religious authority were maintained in the position of the 'Deacon'.

### The Deacon/Elder

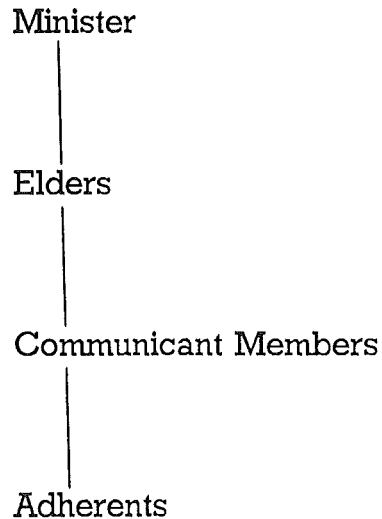
The deacon is a crucial figure in the life of the CCCS. He works closely with the Minister and as a group deacons are influential in decision-making. During the early days of the CCCS, only *matai* were deacons and even today most of them are still *matai*. This applies also to the PIC where the equivalent position to a 'deacon' is that of the elder.<sup>22</sup> The following diagram outlines the position that both the deacon and elder have in relation to the structure of the CCCS and PIC as a whole:

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- 19     *Lei'ataua Tonumaipe'a Tamafaiga* played on the fears that people had of his supernatural powers to gain access to property and women. Refer to Moyle p 129  
20     For fuller details refer to Chapter Two 'The Minister'.  
21     *Meleisea (Lagaga)* p 69  
22     Of the 81 Samoan elders at the PIC used in this study, 43 were *matai*.

CCCS



PIC



*Tiakono* is the Samoan term used to refer to both a deacon and an elder. The majority of deacons in the CCCS and elders (referring specifically to the Samoan elders) in the PIC are men. Samoan women that do hold the status of deacons/elders usually fit one of the following categories: widowed, divorced or married to a non-Samoan. Where a deacon is not a *matai*, during formal or polite conversation, his status as a deacon is referred to directly and the title 'deacon' is used instead of his personal name (eg. *Lau susuge le ali'i tiakono*, 'Your excellency the deacon'). On the other hand, if he is a *matai*, he is referred to primarily by his title as a *matai* but not by his title as a deacon (eg. *Lau tofa*



*To'ala*, Your excellency *To'ala*). In the first situation the status of deacon provides a source of prestige for the untitled person. Although the status as a deacon is also important to the titled person, ultimately his cultural status and title as a *matai* takes priority.

Both the deacon and elder have similar functions in their respective churches. The deacon's primary duties involve assisting the Minister, serving the Holy Sacrament of Communion, being involved with pastoral care and church finances.<sup>23</sup>

The village pastor works closely with his deacons in raising and administering funds for the village church, the national church organisation and the pastor's personal upkeep. Other duties include visiting sick members of the congregation, serving the bread and wine during communion, passing the collection plates during services, and closing the doors of the church during prayers.<sup>24</sup>

Probably the main difference between the position of deacon and elder is that the latter has more authority and a wider range of responsibilities:

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23     *O le Faavae o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano i Samoa* (Constitution of the CCCS) 1974. p 9

24     Tiffany. p 437

.....They will be responsible for ensuring that regular provision is made for worship and the sacraments, for pastoral care and discipline, for education, outreach, and for the ways by which the congregation will nourish its members and serve the world.<sup>25</sup>

The important points to note about the role of deacon and elder are that both maintain a close relationship with the Minister, are influential in the church government and have a pastoral responsibility towards all church members.

In many ways the deacon's and elder's roles within the church parallel those of the *matai* in *fa'aSamoa*. Both are important leadership positions in the community and are responsible for setting good role-models in their personal and public lives. Like many aspects of the church and *fa'aSamoa*, often their roles complement or overlap with one another. One of the main duties of a deacon is leading family devotions every evening, a practice that has become a firmly established part of Samoan life. For both Samoans living in Samoa and even New Zealand, family devotions become a natural part of family life.<sup>26</sup>

Family devotions usually consist of a hymn, short Bible reading, prayer and

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25 K. Pearson *The Elder - Serving the Church*, p 13

26 Both from my personal family experience and the experience of Samoan families generally, family devotions are regularly and strictly observed.

concluding benediction all of which last from five to ten minutes. In Samoa, the time for family devotions is strictly adhered to and enforced by the village council:

**An orator....signals the beginning of the prayer session by blowing a long, foghorn note on a trident-shell trumpet....This signal temporarily seals the village from all intrusion. People who are walking along the road must step off to one side and wait patiently for the *sa*, or "prohibition" to end. If a person's home is nearby, the orators guarding the road hustle them off to join their families in prayer. Those who do not live nearby, but are especially devout, may join the nearest family in their service.<sup>27</sup>**

Those who fail to observe the *sa* are fined by the village council.

Another situation that illustrates the complementary roles of the deacon and *matai* relate to the matter of fundraising for church projects. Initially the Minister will discuss the proposed venture with the deacons before informing the whole congregation during the service. He merely announces the type of project that is proposed (eg. building of a new church), and the approximate amount of money, labour and food that it would require. Once it has been announced it is up to the village *matai* to discuss the project in their own village council meeting and initiate fundraising towards it:

On one occasion, the congregation was informed by the pastor that eight cents should be collected from everyone, including children in order to repair a pastor's residence in another village.....The village council decided that the senior ranking chief of each descent group would be responsible for collecting the money from all the members of households attached to his group and for turning it over to the pastor.<sup>28</sup>

The project is initiated by the church but the actual economic support for it stems from the efforts of the village *matai*.

There are various situations in the PIC too where the role of the elders and the *matai* overlap. Take for example the top leadership positions in (excluding the Minister) which are Session Clerk and Treasurer. Apart from a Session Clerk and Treasurer for the whole PIC congregation (comprised of all the ethnic groups), there is also a Session Clerk and Treasurer specifically for the Samoan group. All the positions are held by Samoan men. The interesting point to note is that both of the men that hold the positions for the whole congregation are not *matai* but the two representing the Samoan side are *matai*. Furthermore, all the top leadership positions in the Samoan women's group are held by the wives of *matai*. For the Samoan Ladies' Welfare group, the positions of President, Secretary and Treasurer' are held by the wives of important *matai* in the

church. In all these powerful positions of leadership it is the *matai* and their wives that dominate.

The same applies to the area of speech-making during church gatherings and official occasions.<sup>29</sup> An example is where a speech of thanks is to be made on behalf of the congregation to a visitor or visitors (eg. a visiting Minister). During such circumstances it is the responsibility of the elders to make the appropriate speeches. A roster system for all the elders in the church means that specific elders will be on duty during certain months of the year. Therefore the elder that will have the privilege of giving a speech of thanks should be on duty at that particular time.

From my own experience in a PIC church an even more significant qualification for giving a speech is a *matai* title. Priority to speak usually goes to a title deacon rather than an untitled deacon. In an earlier research work that I completed, the majority of respondents affirmed this point.<sup>30</sup> Respondents thought it was more respectful and appropriate to give titled deacons the priority to speak because of the fact that they had a *matai* title. Ideally all deacons are

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29 Referring specifically to the Samoan side

30 L. Palenapa Samoan Women's Roles in the Church Unpublished Research Essay 1991

equal (or should be) in the church. However, in reality Samoan deacons and elders are not necessarily treated equally. Titled deacons and elders are accorded more respect than untitled deacons/elders - the cultural status takes priority over the church status.

## CONCLUSION

Regardless of whether he is an *ali'i* or a *tulafale*, the *matai* has always played an integral part in the life of Samoans. As the ceremonial and elected head of the family he is entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining its dignity and well-being. He is the ultimate decision-maker in matters pertaining to the family's welfare; eg. administration of family land. In recognition of the *matai's* authority his family in turn serve him with labour, food and finances. If both parties perform their responsibilities well, the result is a strong, supportive family with a respected *matai* as their head.

Like the *matai* in *fa'aSamoa*, the deacon and elder are significant figures in the Life of the Church. [Referring specifically to the CCCS and PIC]. They provide leadership for the members of the parish and support to the Minister. In a real sense the *matai* embodies and upholds all that is *fa'aSamoa* (Samoan Culture) and to some extent the same sentiment can be applied to the deacon/elder and his role in the church. Therefore, the close relationship that the *matai* and the deacon/elder share (along with its related tensions and problems), in a wider sense illustrate the close relationship between 'church' and 'culture'. Often the roles of the *matai* and the deacon/elder either complement or overlap with each other. Many times church rules and activities are promoted and enforced by the authority of the *matai*. This sense of complementarity pervades all aspects of *fa'aSamoa* and its relationship to the church.

The relationship between the titled and untitled deacon/elder in the church raises the issue of 'spiritual' equality in the life of the church and Christianity vs non-egalitarian ethics of 'secular' society. Although in the eyes of God and of the Christian church all Samoan deacons and elders are 'equal' it would seem that in reality this is not the case. During polite conversation and official church occasions the titled deacons/elders will always have priority over untitled deacons. It would seem therefore that for Samoans in their church life, the non-egalitarian ethics of Samoan 'secular' society (that dictates the superior status of a *matai* to a non-*matai*) takes precedence over the 'spiritual' equality dictated by the church and Christianity.



## CHAPTER FOUR



## WOMEN

"O le Auga o Aute...."<sup>1</sup>

In my search for an appropriate phrase to open my chapter on Samoan women, ironically, it was after talking with a Samoan man (a distinguished politician), that I came across the above phrase.<sup>2</sup> However, it was not until much later after I had first heard it, that I was struck by its appropriateness. Samoan women were not only portrayed as beautiful, traditional flowers, *aute* (Hibiscus); they were portrayed as the paragon of *aute*. In these five words, were embodied one of the ultimate compliments according to *fa'aSamoa* (Samoan Culture), that could be paid to women. Whether this image of Samoan women is shared by ordinary Samoans in their everyday dealings with one another, is one of the points to be determined in this chapter. The way in which Samoan men and women really view each other will be reflected in the type of roles that they hold in all spheres of life, including the church.

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- 1      Literally translates as 'the most beautiful hibiscus'.  
'Auga' normally means the cause, basis, foundation, origin or root of something (eg. Christ is the **root** of the Gospel). However, here it is used in the sense of the best or ultimate of something (eg. the **best flower**).  
'Aute' is the name for the Hibiscus flower, probably the most utilised flower in Samoa (eg. it is used for necklaces in dancing and for decoration).
  - 2      From a conversation with Tupua Tamasese, a former Prime Minister of Western Samoa and present Leader of the Opposition.

Where women's roles are concerned, a research essay I completed in 1991 focussed on the differences between Samoan women's roles in the church and their associated attitudes, depending on whether they were born and/or raised in Samoa or New Zealand. As part of my research, I interviewed 28 people of different ages and sex involved with both the Pacific Islanders Presbyterian Church and Congregational Christian Church of Samoa. The inspiration for this present chapter stemmed from that research essay and therefore a brief summary of its results is in order.<sup>3</sup>

The overall conclusion reached in the RE was that the respondent's place of birth did determine their roles and associated attitudes in the church. For those born and/or raised in Samoa, the roles of the sexes were clearly specified. Men were the decision-makers and leaders both in the secular sphere (eg. *matai* or chiefs) and the religious sphere (eg. *faifeau* or Minister). On the other hand, women were the advisors and supporters to men and were primarily responsible for the care of their children. New Zealand-born and/or raised respondents however, were brought up in a different culture where *fa'aSamoa* was not the norm and where the roles of the sexes were more flexible. Many felt that the roles awarded to the sexes in Samoa were inequitable and disadvantageous to women in particular. All the respondents agreed that there was more equality

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3      From henceforth referred to as RE.

between the sexes in New Zealand (eg. female Ministers/male nurses). Therefore the idea of Samoan women taking on roles which in Samoa were predominantly the reserve of men (eg. Minister/politician) could and would be acceptable here.

Certain issues which were raised during the completion of my RE continued to bother me. Somehow the view constantly conveyed to me by Samoans (and non-Samoans), of both sexes, that Samoan women were oppressed did not necessarily ring true. I had encountered many Samoan women (including my own mother), who appeared far from oppressed.<sup>4</sup>

I questioned whether I had underestimated the extent to which New Zealand-born and/or raised Samoans were exposed to *fa'aSamoa*. As a New Zealand-born and raised Samoan myself, I knew that I had experienced certain aspects of *fa'aSamoa* that many Samoans born and/or raised in Samoa had never experienced.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, I had failed to draw attention to the fact that Samoan women are accorded significant respect as **sisters**. They are treated with courtesy and are

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4 eg. Fetaui Mata'afa, Western Samoa's Consul-general to New Zealand 1990 - 1992.

5 eg. I had the opportunity to participate in an 'Ava Ceremony (traditional-welcoming ceremony), during the Annual *So'otaga* (gathering) of Samoan Tertiary students from all around New Zealand. It was held in Auckland during August, 1992.

highly valued by the brothers and male relatives (usually of the same generation or younger). This stems from the fact that sisters represent the collective honour of the whole 'aiga (family) and therefore the honour of their brothers as members of the 'aiga.<sup>6</sup> The status of **sisters** is a significant one considering the fact that once they are married Samoan women usually derive their status from their husbands. If her husband acquires a chiefly title such as a *tulafale* (orator title), then she is addressed as a *tausí* which refers to the wife of a *tulafale*. In the same way, if a woman's husband becomes a *tiakono* (a deacon), in the church then she is referred to as *le faletua o le tiakono* or 'the wife of the deacon'. However, as a **sister** a woman has a unique status in her own right in relation to her own 'aiga and *nu'u* (village).<sup>7</sup> In the light of all these issues, I decided to reassess the roles of Samoan women in the hope of finding some answers.

## RESULTS:

There were three main categories of questions used in the questionnaires and the results will be analysed in relation to these:

- \* General roles of the sexes
- \* Specific roles of the sexes in the church
- \* Influence of *fa'aSamoa* on the roles of the sexes.

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6 The special relationship between a sister and brother is referred to as *feagaiga* and is treated in more detail in the chapter on the 'Minister'.

7 For fuller details refer to P. Schoeffel Daughters of Sina

## General Roles

### **What is your view of women working?**

The majority of respondents agreed that women should work but all of them qualified their answers by giving certain situations where this was acceptable: where a woman had no children to care for, where the cost of living was such that a woman's financial contribution was desirable and finally, where the husband or father of the family was ill and unable to work. Apart from financial or family commitments, over half the respondents thought that women had various skills/talents and work gave them an opportunity to develop these. Only three respondents clearly stated that women should **not** work but instead stressed that their primary responsibility was at home:

*Duty is caring for children, looking after [the] home and [the] clothes for [her] husband [and] children.*

Others felt that both sexes were entitled to an equal opportunity to work regardless of their sex or the type of job they wanted to do:

*Today women are successful in all areas of work and so should have equal opportunities as men...*

**Is there much difference, if any, between the two sexes?**

Overall, the majority of respondents agreed that there are differences between the sexes and the reasons given for this were varied. The most common difference related to the basic character of each sex and the way that it affected their approach to situations. Men appeared to be more domineering and open:

*Men [are] more stronger and loud in views....*

*Men tend to be more bossy and usually I think they [use] the dominancy [sic] to an advantage.*

On the other hand, women were less aggressive in their approach to situations and because of this they were apparently less dominating than men:

*Women are more passive than the men.*

*.....women are softer and quieter in expressing views.*

Another important difference related to the psychological make-up of the sexes. Time and time again, women were considered to be more **emotional** and **sensitive** than men:

*Men are more logical in their way of thinking. Women tend to base a lot of their decisions on their emotions. Females are....able to express ideas/emotions more so than males.*

Alternatively, one respondent thought that any differences that did exist were not restricted to the sexes, differences exist between **all** individuals:

*There are only basic differences between the people that we are, not with the sexes. God made everyone different so that the world would be more interesting.*

A couple of respondents saw **no** differences between the sexes in relation to the capabilities of both. Any differences that did exist were merely superficial such as physical appearance and the roles that each performed (eg. men/head of family, women/advisors).



### Specific Roles

What do you consider are the appropriate roles for men and women in the church?

#### MEN:

1. Leadership
2. Caretaker
3. Sunday School Teacher  
OR Domestic
4. Role-Model

#### WOMEN:

1. Decorator
2. Childcarer
3. Sunday School Teacher  
OR Domestic
4. Role Model

These were four of the most popular roles considered by respondents to be appropriate for men and women in the church. They have been listed in order of importance. The most common **leadership** roles mentioned by male respondents were Session Clerk, Treasurer and Elder, all of which are positions of important responsibility in both the CCCS and PIC which involve a lot of public speaking. **Caretaker** roles include the maintenance and security of all church buildings, grounds and property. **Domestic** refers mainly to membership of the Samoan Social Committee which among other things is responsible for providing refreshments for the congregation at church functions. As **role-models**, respondents thought men should set good examples for the younger generation at church to aspire to.

For women, interesting points to note from the list are the absence of any significant leadership roles (apart from Sunday School Teacher), and the emphasis on **domestic** roles. A large number of respondents agreed that the role of **decorator** was an essential [if not the essential] role for women at church. This involved decorating and cleaning the church (and other church buildings), for church services with flower arrangements, or providing clean linen for the communion table. Women's house-keeping skills were to be utilised for the benefit of the church.

In the same way, women were also responsible for looking after the children at church and ensuring their good behaviour during services. The role of **Sunday School Teacher** was one of the roles that respondents viewed as appropriate for both sexes. The role of **advisor** was a common one that was associated with women especially by Samoan-born and/or raised respondents. Some respondents did not think that there were so-called 'appropriate' roles for the sexes. They emphasised that both sexes should have equal opportunity to take on any roles:

*I believe that there is no such thing as 'appropriate' roles for the sexes.*

*They can go for any roles they want.*

The majority of respondents who did not differentiate between specific roles for the sexes were New Zealand-born and/or raised. It should be stressed of course, that the roles set out in the list do not incorporate groups/associations specific to women (eg. Samoan Ladies Fellowship). These individual groups include leadership positions such as 'President', 'Secretary' and 'Treasurer'. The leadership roles mentioned in the list relate to the church as a whole (eg. Session Clerk).

#### **Why do women have these roles?**

Custom was a common reason given by respondents to this question. Women had always been and were still associated with roles in the domestic sphere:

*.....they have been doing them for a long period of time, and have been stereotyped I suppose, into doing those roles.*

Others thought that Samoan women had their present roles because of the influence of *fa'aSamoa*:

*In fa'aSamoa women know their roles both in the home or the village.*

Other reasons that were given by respondents were also interesting, some thought men and women were 'naturally-born' with specific roles or that women had their present roles because they had the particular capabilities to cope with them (eg. child care). One respondent thought that women's roles were 'biblically-based':

*The roles....show the Old Testament style treatment of women and the unwillingness of the traditional Church to change with the times.*

At the same time, women were presented as essential because of their very roles. There was an emphasis on the way in which women affected the smooth running of matters relating to society generally:

*Because women put into action the decisions made by men. Without them men can accomplish nothing and [this] applies to the church too. If women perform [their] roles well then it contributes to the good of the future of the church, village and family.*

**Are the roles of both sexes of equal importance?**

An overwhelming number of respondents agreed that the roles of both sexes were equally important and essential for the church to function properly:

*To enable the church to function as God would like it to I feel that everyone....should work together, thus the roles that they play are of equal importance.*

*....their roles involve different aspects of the church which are [all] important.*

*....'team effort' from both sexes is needed in the running of the church.*

The respondents that disagreed focused on the actual roles of the sexes rather than their overall importance. As each sex had different roles they could not be compared. All the respondents that disagreed were Samoan-born and/or raised. In contrast all those who felt that the roles were equally important were New Zealand-born and/or raised.

**"Church Roles": State under each whether you think a female or a male would be more appropriate for that role?**

| <u>CHURCH ROLE:</u> | <u>MALE</u> | <u>FEMALE</u> | <u>BOTH</u> |
|---------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| Elder               | 5           | -             | 20          |
| Session Clerk       | 7           | -             | 18          |
| Treasurer           | 5           | 1             | 19          |
| Lay Preacher        | 15          | 1             | 9           |
| Minister            | 12          | -             | 13          |
| Moderator           | 14          | -             | 11          |

In setting out the list of church roles for respondents, I began with those lower down in the church hierarchy (eg. elder) and culminated with those at the top of the hierarchy (eg. moderator). Interesting points to highlight are the higher number of respondents more willing to accept both men and women for roles lower down in the church hierarchy (eg. elder) while the opposite applies to those further up in the hierarchy (with the exception of Minister).

In both the PIC and CCCS, women may become ordained as elders but usually under certain circumstances. Where women are elders, they usually fit one of several categories; they are either single, widowed or married to a non-Samoan. Women are not normally elders if their husband is already an elder for as alluded to in the opening of this chapter, once they are married, Samoan women derive status from their husbands.

A prime example of this can be seen in the case of the PIC church used in this study. There are a total of 120 elders in the church comprised of Europeans, Niueans, Cook Islanders and Samoans. 81 of these elders are Samoan. Of these 81, 13 are Samoan women. Seven of these women have never been married, three are widows, two are married to Europeans (neither of whom are elders or regular church attenders), and one is divorced. In contrast, there are at least one or more married couples including Europeans and Niueans at church where **both** the husband and wife are elders.

The roles of **treasurer** and **lay preacher** are important because they are the only two roles which were considered by [at least two] respondents to be suitable for women specifically. One respondent thought that the **treasurer** position was more suitable for women because they were more honest than men in handling finances. In relation to the position of **lay preacher** one respondent thought that it was more acceptable for women to be **lay preachers** rather than **Ministers** as men would have more impact as the latter.

Certain inconsistencies were apparent among some respondents who disagreed with females becoming **lay preachers** or **moderators** and yet agreed that they could become **Ministers**. In many cases I suspect they were influenced by my own personal situation.<sup>8</sup> I am certain therefore, that the number of respondents who disagreed with women becoming **Ministers**, should be higher.

At present the CCCS does not allow women to train as Ministers and so CCCS respondents indicated that this was their reason for disagreeing with the idea of women taking on higher church roles. Until CCCS policy on this issue changed they could not agree with the idea. With the exception of two, all the

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8 I will be undergoing Theological training as a Presbyterian Minister at Knox College, Dunedin in 1993.

New Zealand-born and/or raised respondents agreed that women were capable of taking on all the church roles listed. The two that disagreed gave their reasons **tradition** and the **Bible** (ie. the Bible does not say that women can be Ministers).

### Influence of *fa'aSamoa*

Certain problems were encountered in the analysis of the questions in this category. There seemed to be a lack of elaboration in the answers given by respondents and an inconsistency between Samoan and New Zealand-born and/or raised respondents' interpretation of the questions. The majority of respondents stated clearly and definitely either that they agreed or disagreed with a certain question. However, they failed to explain the reason(s) for their answer. Many respondents stated that they had never really thought about some of the issues raised by some of the questions.

### **Do you think there is a 'Samoan' way of doing things in church?**

The majority of New Zealand-born and/or raised respondents agreed that there was a 'Samoan' way of doing things in church. The type of examples given by respondents to support their answers related to things that they themselves had experienced:



*When a family gives a donation for a special reason (eg. a son's 21st) to the church. They always read out the amount in front of the congregation.*

*....European viewpoint of [the] reverend is respect but without giving so much [sic] to earn the reverend's grace as much as the Samoan [viewpoint].*

*Obey your elders....*

Samoan-born and/or raised respondents interpreted the question differently because of the way in which it was translated. They interpreted the questions as 'whether there was a place for a *fa'aSamoa* in church?' With the exception of one respondent, all agreed that *fa'aSamoa* should be a part of church but it should be used only when and where appropriate. There was a general agreement that a balance between *fa'aSamoa* and the church should be achieved but *fa'aSamoa* should never take priority over the church.

**Do you see any differences between 'Palagi' and 'Samoan' ways of looking at roles in the church?**

The main point to note here was the constant emphasis by all the respondents that there was more 'equality' between the sexes in the Palagi (European) culture. According to fa'aSamoa however, there seemed to be a definite disparity between the sexes which was reflected by the roles they had:

*Palagi tend to be more....equal in sharing roles....Whereas, [for] Samoan[s] there is a 'sex' division between roles - females are subordinate to the males therefore the roles women hold are of less importance. Samoan[s] are man-[dominated] than woman and more older [dominated] than young.*

**Do you think that more importance and respect is attached to a deacon or elder that has a *matai* (chiefly) title rather than an untitled deacon or elder?**

Most respondents agreed with this question because the *matai* title gives the titled deacon/elder additional status:

*Apart from being an elder the person has also [sic] a title of a **matai** which means that a lot of respect is held in a **matai** title, if the elder/deacon holds this already then it 'proves' that their respect and importance is magnified.*

*....they [referring to titled elders] have the title which identifies their role and authority. It's the culture.*

Alternatively, some thought that in the eyes of God and the church, everyone was equal regardless of whether they were titled or untitled:

*....all men are equal although sometimes I think that's what happens to our church that they have more respect for their **matai** instead of [their] elders.*

## CONCLUSION

As a result of this study I would conclude that generally Samoan women are as strong and influential (if not more) as Samoan men both in the public and private spheres. In relation to work, the majority of respondents did not see a problem with women working especially when living in New Zealand where money plays such an essential role. The main situation that was given by respondents that was against women working was where they had children (especially young ones) to look after. It should be pointed out that there were an equal number of both male and female respondents that felt this way.

Overall, respondents stated that there were differences between the sexes in their basic character and personality. Men appeared to be more dominating than women because they are louder and more aggressive in expressing opinions. However, although Samoan women are softer and quieter in expressing their opinions, the fact is that those opinions are still put forward. They are not necessarily submissive or less dominating than the men, perhaps just more subtle in their approach.

This is illustrated by respondents' views about the specific roles of the sexes in church. There was still the definite public/private (domestic) dichotomy in relation to the roles of the sexes. Men were responsible for the security of the church buildings and property. Women maintained the upkeep of the inside of

the church building. Respondents thought that the sexes had their particular roles not only because of 'Custom' but also because of their individual capabilities. Presumably women had the necessary 'motherly' skills to deal with children better than men. Regardless of their roles however, both men and women were essential for the smooth running of both the church and society. There was a sense of complementarity between the sexes.

*Because women put into action the decisions made by men. Without them men can accomplish nothing and [this] applies to the church too.*

The majority of respondents [still] preferred men to hold leadership roles further up in the church hierarchy (ie. Lay Preacher, Minister and Moderator). There was encouragement in the fact that most saw men and women as equally suited to holding other significant leadership roles in the Church (ie. Elder, Session Clerk and Treasurer). From the comments made by respondents, in their own experiences men had always held particular leadership roles (eg. Minister) and so they continued to be stereotyped in those roles. Even if women were just as capable of holding those same roles they would find it hard to treat them the same way. Several expressed a concern that women would not acquire the same respect as men in such roles.

Despite the problems associated with the questions about the influence of *fa'aSamoa* on the roles of the sexes some interesting points came through. The New Zealand-born and/or raised respondents used in this study showed an awareness and an ability to identify specific aspects of *fa'aSamoa*:

*When a family gives a donation for a special reason (eg. a son's 21st) to the church. They always read out the amount in front of the congregation.*<sup>9</sup>

Like their counterparts born and/or raised in Samoa, they had an opportunity to experience *fa'aSamoa* first hand (eg. 'Ava Ceremony) and this should not be underestimated. Unfortunately the majority of respondents usually presented a negative view of *fa'aSamoa* as generally sexist, restrictive and hypocritical:

*Obey your elders.*

*...females are subordinate to the males....*

*...European viewpoint of [the] reverend is respect but without giving so much [sic] to earn the reverend's grace as much as the Samoan.*

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9 During an informal survey of 10 young people all of whom were New Zealand-born and/or raised, I questioned them on their basic knowledge of *fa'aSamoa*. All expressed a surprise at the end of the survey at just how much they actually knew and had experienced.

For most Samoan-born and/or raised respondents *fa'aSamoa* played an important part in the church and should continue to do so. At the same time it was stressed that the church always had priority over *fa'aSamoa*.

Of course as the results in this study have shown, many times such a fine statement often turns out to be the ideal and a far cry from what actually happens in real life.

## CHAPTER FIVE





## YOUTH

"O le faamoemoe o Samoa mo a taeao..."<sup>1</sup>

In the process of interviewing various church leaders for my research one question that I always posed to them was "What do you think are the main concerns facing the church today?" Time and time again, their reply would include the problems faced by youth and the efforts (or lack of) made by the church to deal with them. Samoan Youth, like other young people, face many social pressures either from their peers to conform to accepted norms (eg. use of alcohol or pre-marital sex), or from their elders to succeed in life (eg. education or career-wise). In their struggle to cope with all these pressures, they also have to deal with coming to terms with their own cultural identity as Samoans. (For the purposes of this chapter, the terms "Youth" and "Adolescent" will both be used synonymously to mean "...the period from puberty till the attainment of full growth between childhood and adult age").<sup>2</sup> Decisions which had been formerly made by parents and others are now left to the adolescent to decide.

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1 Samoa's hope for the future.

2 The Little Oxford Dictionary. pp 92 and 131

Samoan migrants who settle in New Zealand, regardless of how long they live here, will always identify culturally as "Samoan". Any children that they may raise will also be regarded by them as "Samoan". However, once these children reach adolescence, they may have their own views about the cultural identity that they prefer. For many, it may be more appropriate and comfortable to be referred to primarily as a "New Zealander" rather than a "Samoan" because they were born and/or raised in New Zealand and not Samoa.

In the same way, adolescents may also view their religious identity differently as compared to when they were younger. Religious identity becomes defined by "internal" rather than "external" terms.<sup>3</sup>

Instead of understanding a "Christian" as someone that goes to church every Sunday, he or she is seen as someone that has faith in God. From my own experience of growing up in a predominantly Samoan church, I noticed a high number of Samoans attended church around pre-school to post-high school age (St. Pauls Trinity Pacific Presbyterian Church is comprised of European, Cook Island, Niuean and Samoan ethnic groups with the majority group being Samoan). However, following High School and (if applicable) tertiary studies, many young Samoans drifted away to alternative churches or simply stopped going to church altogether.

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3 B. Spilka Psychology of Religion p 5.

The point to note about this is that the majority of those young people who did leave were born and/or raised in New Zealand.<sup>4</sup>

Yet, almost all the young people born and/or raised in Samoa tended to remain and further strengthened their ties by later marrying and assuming various roles within the church.<sup>5</sup> In this chapter, I hope to show that the disparity between the levels of participation for Samoan-born and/or raised both in New Zealand and Samoa is related to the extent that each are exposed to *fa'aSamoa*. To clarify what I mean I will use the example of church attendance.

For Samoans born and/or raised in Samoa especially within a village setting, attending church becomes a natural part of life. From a young age they are taken to church and they become involved in various groups such as the Sunday School, Youth and Choir.<sup>6</sup> It becomes both a religious duty (ie. in the sense that all Christians should worship God in his "House"), and also a cultural obligation (ie. people could be fined by village *matai* for non-attendance).<sup>7</sup> When they

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4 An example are five families that have been involved with the PIC for more than 10 years along with their children who now range in age from mid-teens to late 30's. Only four of these families have at least one of their children still regularly attending the PIC. Two are in their teens, the other three are in their 30's.

5 For example the PIC Samoan Youth Group has a predominantly Samoan-born and/or raised membership with their average age ranging from mid to late 20's. In contrast, the Multi-cultural Youth Group is predominantly comprised of New Zealand-born and/or raised members with an average age of mid-late teens.

6 Refer to Table Two in Appendix 1.

7 During my stay in the village of Gautavai (on the south side of the island of Savaii, Western Samoa), I witnessed a committee of village *matai* visiting individual houses on Sunday. Any person found not attending church for any reason OTHER than illness could be fined with money or food which was paid to the committee. This took place in January, 1990.

come to live in New Zealand, church attendance continues to remain important because of the role it has played in their upbringing.

The church (whether PIC or CCCS) provides an attractive and secure environment for migrants from Samoa. For both newly-arrived and established migrants church is a place where they can all come into contact with Samoans and learn of news from Samoa.<sup>8</sup> Samoan language is spoken and read within the context of the church worship through Bible readings, sermons and hymns. Through church groups such as the '*Au Talavou*', other aspects of *fa'aSamoa* (eg. Samoan '*siva*', dance and '*kilikiti*', cricket) are further maintained and promoted.<sup>9</sup> Samoan-born and/or raised migrants are able to participate in cultural activities that they had grown up with in Samoa.

For New Zealand-born and/or raised Samoans, they view church attendance differently to their migrant brothers and sisters. Although brought up within the church too, they do not live in a society where church attendance is an accepted norm as in Samoa. When they reach adolescence, they begin to make their own choices about church and their religious identity. They may choose

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8 D. Pitt and C. MacPherson Emerging Pluralism p 55.

9 B. Duncan "Christianity: Pacific Island Traditions" p 135 from Religions of New Zealanders Editor Donovan.

to stay at their present church, to change churches, or to stop attending church altogether. By employing the use of questionnaires I carried out my own investigations into these issues, the results of which will now be looked at in closer detail.

## **RESULTS**

There were four categories of questions and analysis of the questionnaire will be made in relation to these:

1. View(s) of Christianity
2. Relationship with the Church
3. Influence of *fa'aSamoa*
4. Youth in the Church

### **View(s) of Christianity**

**Do you think a person can be a good Christian if he/she doesn't attend church?**

| Yes | No | Don't Know | TOTAL |
|-----|----|------------|-------|
| 16  | 5  | 9          | 30    |

Of the five that answered 'no' three were Samoan-born and/or raised while the other two were New Zealand-born and/or raised. A few respondents stated that a person could be a good Christian without attending church but it would be difficult without the 'fellowship, teaching and encouragement' that a church community could provide. Another felt that it didn't matter where one worshipped (ie. whether in a church building or not), as long as God was the

focus. One respondent simply said that a person would still be a Christian (even if he or she wasn't attending church), but he or she would not be a 'full Christian'.

### **What does being 'Christian' mean to you?**

Almost all the respondents answered this question in one of two ways either by referring to an inner relationship with God (or Christ) OR by associating a Christian with certain outward behaviour. The following were a few of the most common responses given:

*Belief in Christ and the Trinity....*

*Believing in God and yourself....*

*Believing that Christ died for us....*

Many respondents referred to a 'Christian' as a 'servant of God', someone that had 'surrendered' his or her life to Him. One common response was that a Christian was someone prepared 'to give up his life to follow Him' or 'to give up his life to help others'. The majority of respondents included in their answers some reference to either God or Christ. The rest of the respondents associated a Christian simply with a certain code of behaviour.

*Treating others the way that you want to be treated. I think, feel, behave in ways in whereby I do to others as I would like others to do to me. [sic]*

An interesting answer placed the church in a secondary place to personal initiative.

*It should mean you can do whatever you want to do, no one is forcing you to do something. [sic] But still read the Bible and pray, it doesn't have to be at church.*

#### Relationship with the church

**What or who influenced you to join your present church?**

The most common response to this question was that someone, usually the parents or other members of the family, had influenced the respondent into joining his or her present church. Some said that they had been 'born into the church' and stated that they had simply been taken along by the rest of the family to church each week. Others had joined because they had 'experienced a sense of need or void in their feelings about life'. Only two respondents stated that they had joined because of 'the opportunity to socialise and meet friends'.



I suspect that other respondents may have been influenced by their familiarity with me when writing their answers. (As a Youth Leader in the PIC many of the respondents may have been wary in case I told their parents any of their responses). The least popular reason with only one respondent opting for it was 'the sense of dissatisfaction with another church'.

**Are you satisfied with attending your present church?**

22 respondents out of a total of 30 all stated that they were satisfied with their present church. The most common reasons given by respondents to support this were the familiarity with both the people and the church. Others emphasised that they found a friendly and comfortable environment at their church.

*I know everyone can relate better with church friends and their support.*

*....atmosphere is just right....friendly people.*

Of the few that were dissatisfied with their church, the most common reasons given was the lack of spiritual feeling experienced there or too much formality in the church services.

"Felt more spiritually touched at other churches".

"It's not alive. Can get too boring, too formal".

Other respondents felt that their present church failed to meet all their needs and caused them dissatisfaction.

**Do you think you will still be attending church in three or four years?**

This was an interesting question because 24 of the respondents all said that 'yes' they would probably still be attending church in three or four years. Six said that they did not know and the reasons given were that either 'the future was uncertain' (you did not know whether you would still be alive or not), or they probably would attend church but they did not know whether it would be the same church that they were presently attending.

No respondents said that they would definitely not be attending at all. For those who said 'yes' the main reason given was the intention of keeping God as a part of their lives and church was seen as an extension of this.

"Because Christians....need support/encouragement/administering to and guidance that a well functioning church offers".

Influence of *fa'aSamoa*

**Do you think there is a 'Samoan' way of doing things in church?**

26 respondents all agreed that there was a 'Samoan' way of doing things in church and the important thing to note about this was the fact that all three Europeans were among them. Some of the observances that they picked out as being specifically 'Samoan' are interesting when compared with those made by the Samoan respondents.

European:

- \* Family involvement important.
- \* Great deference given to Minister.
- \* Formality of Church services  
(ie. structured/serious).
- \* Lack of division between the  
secular and religious authority.

Samoan:

- \* Adults before children.
- \* Ministers/elders held in high regard.
- \* Compulsory Church attendance.
- \* Donations for guest preachers.

**What do you think *fa'aSamoa* means?**

Many associated *fa'aSamoa* with doing things in the traditional Samoan way as practised in Samoa. This included holding a 'respect' especially for parents and other elders, using a certain type of etiquette such as formal language spoken by chiefs and orators when in public. A few respondents thought *fa'aSamoa* incorporated Christianity and one even said that part of *fa'aSamoa* was church attendance. One respondent specifically stated that *fa'aSamoa* and Christianity should not be mixed.

Youth

**As a young person, do you think the church has a place for you?**

Almost all the respondents (with the exception of one), felt that there was a place for young people in the church or there should be.

## CONCLUSION:

From the results of this study it would appear that there is very little difference between Samoan-born and/or raised AND New Zealand-born and/or raised youth and their attitudes towards the church. For most of the New Zealand-born and/or raised respondents their motivation for attending church (usually) stemmed from the influence of other people, primarily parents. Like their Samoan-born and/or raised counter-parts they too had been attending church regularly from a young age. To some extent therefore, church attendance is a norm for them as Samoans living in New Zealand even if it is not the norm for New Zealand society generally.

All the respondents expressed a desire to retain the church (and religion) as a part of their lives. Most were satisfied with their present church as a common reason given for this was the opportunity to enjoy fellowship with family and friends. As young people it was interesting (but not surprising to note that most of the aspects that respondents identified as 'fa'aSamoa' related to the respect accorded elders. The comments from the three European respondents did not affect the overall conclusion but merely served to provide further comparison for the Samoan respondents. Many of the observances that they identified as Samoan were those that Samoan respondents take for granted. (eg. importance of family involvement.)

A large number of the respondents were of senior High School and Tertiary level education, at a stage when crucial decisions about such aspects as 'religion' become important.

For the majority of them they were satisfied with their present church and had every intention of staying at least for the time being.

I would suggest two reasons for this situation. One is a general reason relating to *fa'aSamoa* as a whole. From my own experience as a young Samoan and the comments of many of the respondents themselves, one of the golden rules in *fa'aSamoa* is 'Respect your elders'.

'Respect' incorporates such concepts as 'obedience' and in practical terms this means obeying your parents and elders regardless.

Therefore, if the parents attend a particular church regularly and expect their children to do the same, the children will usually abide by their parent's wishes. This may well be the case for some, if not all the respondents used in this study. The second reason is more specifically related to the group of young people used in the study. Over the past two years, there has been a significant growth in the numbers of New Zealand-born and/or raised youth in St. Pauls Trinity Pacific Presbyterian Church. This has seen the establishment of a strong and supportive Multi-cultural Youth Group.

The group is very popular and provides not only a spiritual but social fellowship for all its members. Perhaps for many of the young people who were former church members such a group was not available to them and therefore contributed to their loss of interest in St. Pauls or in the "church" altogether.

It would seem that for all the Samoan Youth used in this study their experiences of church life were generally positive. They were positive in the sense that they still felt that the "church" was an important part of their lives and always would be. However, there were also some negative aspects to their experience of church life as experienced from their perspective as Samoans. Where these aspects became oppressive to them as young people in the church then they had to be changed or reassessed.



## **CONCLUSION**

## CONCLUSION

It was stated from the outset of this study that it had primarily a two-fold purpose and discussion will be made in relation to this.

1. To consider the relationship between *fa'aSamoa* and the Church  
(in the context of the PIC and CCCS Churches in New Zealand).

Even before the acceptance of Christianity in Samoa, the relationship between *fa'aSamoa* and religion had always been a close one. No other figure incorporated the close affinity of the two concepts more than the *matai* (chief). In pre-Christian Samoa he was not merely the decision-maker in 'secular' matters but also the 'religious' mediator between his family and their household gods. Once Christianity was accepted by the Samoans the nature of the relationship between *fa'aSamoa* and the Christian Church changed yet the importance of both remained the same.

The main impact of Christianity was that it effectively separated the authority and sphere of the Church and *fa'aSamoa*. Much of the religious role and authority experienced by the *matai* in former pre-Christian Samoa was now transferred to other figures. Probably the most important of these figures were the Minister and the Deacon. In the same way that the *matai* in pre-Christian Samoa were respected because of their association with the gods, so too, the Minister was respected as a man of God.

However, the Minister was respected even more importantly because he embodied a unique concept in *fa'aSamoa* - the concept of *feagaiga*. Many aspects of this concept pervade the ways in which all Samoans relate to each other in both *fa'aSamoa* and the Church. Two important aspects are the sense of respect (*fa'aaloalo*) for one another and the dichotomy between what is 'sacred' and 'profane'. Respect extends to the avoidance of inappropriate language or behaviour and the fact that people could be fined for showing disrespect to a Minister illustrated that this was regarded as a serious matter.

An example of the way in which the sacred-profane functioned can be seen in the original *feagaiga* relationship between a sister and brother. In this relationship the sister represented the 'sacred' and 'moral' element and as such was responsible for maintaining the dignity and good reputation of her whole family (including her brother(s)). Her brother was the 'profane' element in their relationship and was responsible for serving his sister and for protecting her honour. In practical terms this meant preventing the advances of any potential suitors towards their sister. The same dichotomy is applied to the situation of the Minister who as the Man of God represented the 'sacred' element as opposed to his congregation who represented the 'profane'.

Another important figure in the Church was the deacon/elder who carried out many of the roles formerly incorporated as part of the role of the *matai* in pre-Christian Samoa. One such role was the leadership enforcement of family devotions. As already mentioned (in the chapter of 'Chiefs, Deacons and Elders'), people were fined by the village council if they failed to observe

the proper time for family devotions. Often the roles of the deacon/elder and village *matai* overlapped and both shared many similarities. Like the *matai* in *fa'aSamoa* the deacon/elder was an important leadership role. He was always at the forefront of decision-making in the Church, and primarily responsible for the welfare of others.

In relation to *fa'aSamoa* it has always been widely believed by many people (both non-Samoan and Samoan) that one of the groups that has always remained in a weak and exploited position is 'women'.

It would seem from the comments of the respondents made in this study that Samoan women were just as dominant and strong (if not more), than their male counterparts. Although many women lacked leadership positions in both *fa'aSamoa* and the Church, they were still able to influence the decisions made by those in leadership positions significantly. They were important as advisors and supporters to men and in putting into action the decisions made by them and were therefore equally as important as Samoan men. One respondent summed it up the best when she said: 'Without them men can accomplish nothing and this applies to the Church too'.

2. To compare the views of the Samoan-born and New Zealand-born and/or raised Samoans  
(from both the PIC and CCCS).

Probably the chapter on 'Youth' is the most relevant here in reaching an overall conclusion. From the results of the questionnaire on 'Youth' it was established that there were no real differences between the views of Samoan-born and New Zealand-born and/or raised Samoans in relation to *fa'aSamoa* and the Church. Generally both were exposed to the same aspects of *fa'aSamoa* and therefore shared similar experiences. A common example given by all respondents was the way in which Samoans donated money to the Church (ie. the amount is publicly announced). Interestingly enough, although both Samoan-born and New Zealand born and/or raised respondents acknowledged a dissatisfaction of many aspects of *fa'aSamoa* (eg. special deference given to the Minister), most were not prepared to or unable to do anything about the situation.

The reason for this relates once again to the close relationship of the Church and *fa'aSamoa*. The same commandment that is written in the Christian Bible 'To respect your parents' is paralleled in *fa'aSamoa* with the unspoken law 'to obey one's elders'. Throughout all aspects of the Life of Samoans the Church and *fa'aSamoa* serve to support each other in playing a significant and dominating role.

**APPENDIX 1:**

**METHODOLOGY**

The bulk of the research for this study was carried out in the Christchurch area over the period of a year. The methods which were utilised included questionnaires, interviews with key figures in the Samoan community and participant observation. Two important factors that were taken into consideration when determining appropriate methods for obtaining data were time and accuracy. As I was limited to a year in which to complete my research time was of the essence.

The chapters on 'Women' and 'Youth' required input from a large number of people. I knew from past experience many hassles involved in trying to arrange interviews with respondents (eg. establishing a convenient time and place), therefore it was decided that the use of questionnaires would be adopted. Respondents would have the opportunity to be open and honest in their answers while at the same time maintaining a degree of anonymity perhaps not available in the context of an interview. However, once the use of questionnaires was adopted, it soon became apparent that it, also, had certain disadvantages.

Many times questionnaires were not properly completed with respondents either failing to answer all the questions or not elaborating on their answers. Consequently, additional time was spent in ringing up respondents or meeting them personally to clarify particular answers. Some questionnaires were lost and had to be replaced. Inevitably an exercise which was initially planned to last only a few weeks eventually stretched out to over a month.

The questionnaires used in the chapter on 'Women' were primarily based on those used in a research essay I completed in 1991 concerning Samoan women's roles in the church.<sup>1</sup> As many of the respondents spoke Samoan as their mother tongue rather than English, both an English and Samoan questionnaire were made available to them.<sup>2</sup> Certain changes were made to the questionnaires which involved the deletion of some questions in the English version (eg. Is the Samoan way of doing things in church the only way of doing things?). Additional questions were included in the English questionnaire (eg. How would you describe the relationship that men and women have within Samoan culture?). The alterations were made to improve the questionnaires and to make the questions clearer for the respondents.

Apart from the respondents used for the questionnaires, several other young people were interviewed from different religious backgrounds (but including CCCS). They were asked similar questions to those used in both the questionnaires for 'Women' and 'Youth'. All of them were Samoan-born and/or raised males currently studying at a New Zealand university. With the exception of one of them (who lives permanently in New Zealand), all of the interviewees live in New Zealand for study purposes only.

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1 From henceforth referred to as RE.

2 Copies of both these questionnaires are included in Appendix 2.



Therefore, they keep up-to-date with both the situation in New Zealand and Samoa. Presumably because of this they could throw a different light on the issues of Samoan 'Women' and Samoan 'Youth' and the churches in New Zealand to persons permanently living here.

TABLE ONE:  
(Personal Details)

| R:        | AGE:  |       |     | SEX: | BIRTHPLACE: |      |       | EDUCATION: |      |          |      |
|-----------|-------|-------|-----|------|-------------|------|-------|------------|------|----------|------|
|           | 16-18 | 19-21 | 22+ | M F  | Samoa       | N.Z. | Other | Prim.      | Sec. | School C | Tert |
| 1.        | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 2.        | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 3.        | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 4.        | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 5.        | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 6.        | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 7.        | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 8.        | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 9.        | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 10.       | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 11.       | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 12.       | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 13.       | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 14.       | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 15.       | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 16.       | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 17.       | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 18.       | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 19.       | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 20.       | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 21.       | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 22.       | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 23.       | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 24.       | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 25.       | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 26.       | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 27.       | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 28.       | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 29.       | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| 30.       | :     | :     | :   | :    | :           | :    | :     | :          | :    | :        | :    |
| TOTAL: 18 | 9     | 3     | 13  | 17   | 11          | 17   | 2     | 0          | 0    | 17       | 13   |

\* R = Respondent  
 Sec = 3 years Secondary School  
 School C = School Cert. level upwards  
 Tert. = Tertiary

[Table Two : Church History]

| COMMUNICANT MEMBER |     | DURATION OF MEMBERSHIP IN PRESENT CHURCH |         |          | EXTENT OF CHURCH INVOLVEMENT (PAST AND PRESENT) |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
|--------------------|-----|--|---------|----------|---|----------------------------|------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
|                    | Yes | No                                       | 1-5 yrs | 5-10 yrs | 10+   | Sunday School (Samoa) (NZ) | Autaumafai | Multicultural Youth | Au Talavou (Samoa) (NZ) | Choir (Samoa) (NZ) |
| 1.                 |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 2.                 |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 3.                 |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 4.                 |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 5.                 |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 6.                 |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 7.                 |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 8.                 |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 9.                 |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 10.                |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 11.                |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 12.                |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 13.                |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 14.                |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 15.                |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 16.                |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 17.                |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 18.                |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 19.                |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 20.                |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 21.                |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 22.                |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 23.                |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 24.                |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 25.                |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 26.                |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 27.                |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 28.                |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 29.                |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
| 30.                |     |  |         |          |   |                            |            |                     |                         |                    |
|                    | 16  | 12                                       | 8       | -        | 2   | 7 23                       | 2          | 17                  | 7 6                     | 4 5                |

There were 25 respondents in all that completed questionnaires on 'Women' and for general statistical purposes they were divided into various categories as illustrated by the tables on the previous pages. The ages of the respondents ranged from a minimum of 16 years of age to a maximum of 64 years of age. Respondents were mainly women because they were the primary focus of the study with some men being included for comparison. Samoan-born and/or raised respondents who belonged to the PIC who had been formerly involved with CCCS were particularly important. They could compare and contrast the roles of Samoan women from their experiences in both the CCCS and PIC. The marital status of respondents was important in determining whether this had any relevance on their answers to individual questions (eg. A woman's ability to hold leadership roles in the church).

From Table Two it can be seen that there are a wide range of church groups and associations in both the CCCS and PIC in which respondents can belong. Certain points to note are the markedly higher number of groups available to members of the PIC church because of the different ethnic groups involved. Apart from general groups that involve all members of the church as a whole (eg. combined choir and APW)<sup>3</sup>, all the ethnic groups have their own individual groups (eg. Samoan Choir and Samoan Ladies Fellowship). Alternatively,

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3 APW is an abbreviation for Association of Presbyterian Women.

certain groups are unique to the CCCS and are not recognised in the PIC (eg. "*Mafutaga a Faletua ma Tausi*" which is the fellowship for the wives of chiefs and orators").

Part of the material used in the chapters on the 'Minister' and 'Elders' resulted from a series of interviews conducted throughout the year with clergy (of both the PIC and CCCS), lay people and academics. Interviews were usually conducted either at interviewee's homes or work places. Throughout the year I was also privileged to attend a few conferences: PIC Minister's Retreat (Dunedin), Samoan Students Annual So'otaga (Auckland) and Pacific History Conference (Christchurch). Apart from providing much interesting and relevant material they provided valuable opportunities to interview key people.

### Sample and Administration

For the chapter on 'Women' rather than using a strict criteria for selecting respondents as I had used in my RE (ie. focussing specifically on those heavily involved with the church or holding prominent positions), I opted for a broad criteria. Respondents had to be aged from 16 years old upwards, Samoan, and a member of either of the PIC or CCCS churches. It was irrelevant whether a respondent was involved in any church groups or not as long as they gave the

reasons for their lack of involvement. The aim was to get the widest range of respondents as possible in relation to sex, age and cultural background (ie. New Zealand-born and/or raised AND Samoan-born and/or raised).

The respondents selected for the chapter on 'Youth' were grouped into three main categories: New Zealand-born and/or raised; Samoan-born and/or raised; and were from both the CCCS and PIC congregations, the majority are from the latter. The reasons for this include the larger number of potential respondents to choose from, the absence of Europeans from the CCCS (for comparisons), and the easier access that I had to respondents from the PIC. The only restrictions were that respondents be single and aged from 16 years - 25 years of age. This appeared to be the crucial period of time during which the levels of participation in the church were either consolidated or given up altogether by youth.

An interesting point that arose when selecting respondents was the lack of Samoan-born and/or raised males available to choose from. At the PIC there was a sufficient number of Samoan-born and/or raised males who were members of the *'Au Talavou* (Samoan Youth Group). However, of this group, only one was under 25 years of age. At the same time, there was a large number of Samoan-born and/or raised females from the relevant age group to choose from.

As an active member of the PIC church used in this study I had many opportunities during which I could be a participant observer. These included attending church services, meetings or official functions such as the induction of church members as elders. From attending services of various branches of the CCCS in both New Zealand and Samoa and data gathered during the completion of this study, I found that both functioned along almost identical lines. Therefore, the comments on those involved with other branches of the CCCS in New Zealand were also valuable.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The main difference seemed to be that in Samoa, two services were held (ie. morning and afternoon), whereas in New Zealand there was only one.

## **APPENDIX 2**

(Questionnaires for 'Women' and 'Youth')



QUESTIONNAIRE FOR WOMEN

Male/Female

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status:  
Single/Married

\* Please circle appropriate answer or fill in space provided:

1. What is your view of women working? (ie. Agree/disagree)

\* Please give the reason(s) for your answer \_\_\_\_\_

2. How long have you been a member of your present church?
3. What groups or associations are you presently involved in?
4. Is your family involved with the same church as you?

5. If you were born/and or raised in Samoa, please answer the following questions:

- What church did you belong to in Samoa?

- What groups or associations were you involved in?

6. What type of activities are promoted by the groups/associations you are involved in?  
(eg. fellowship)

7. Why did you join them? (eg. security, enjoyment)

8. How much time is involved with these groups/associations?  
(eg. a few hours per week or a few days)

9. Do you hold any leadership roles within these groups/associations  
OR do the groups/associations involve leadership abilities? (eg. Sunday School Teacher  
or Youth Leader)
  
10. What do you consider are the appropriate role(s) for men in the Church?
  
11. What do you consider are the appropriate role(s) for women in the Church?
  
12. Why do you think women have these role(s)?  
(eg. God or Ordained/Biblical, In-born or Custom)

Please give the reason(s) for your answer \_\_\_\_\_

13. Are the roles of both sexes of equal importance?

Please give the reason(s) for your answer \_\_\_\_\_

14. Look carefully at the following list of Church roles and state under each whether you think a woman or a male would be more appropriate for that role AND why?

- |      |               |             |
|------|---------------|-------------|
| i.   | Elder         | Male/Female |
| ii.  | Session Clerk | Male/Female |
| iii. | Treasurer     | Male/Female |
| iv.  | Lay Preacher  | Male/Female |
| v.   | Minister      | Male/Female |
| vi.  | Moderator     | Male/Female |

15. Do you think a woman's **marital status** (ie. whether she is single or married), should affect her ability or potential to hold any of the roles listed above?
16. Do you think a woman's **age** should affect her potential to hold any of the roles listed above?
17. Do you think there is a 'Samoan' way of doing things in Church and if so, can you give at least one example of it?
18. Do you see any differences between 'Palagi' and 'Samoan' ways of looking at roles in the Church?
19. Do you think that more importance and respect is attached to an elder or deacon that has a **matai** title rather than an untitled elder or deacon? If so, why?

20. Why do you think that preference is usually given to men to express speeches of thanks to visiting preachers etc. during the cup of tea after the afternoon service?
21. Are there many differences, if any, between the two sexes?  
(eg. basic character/personality/abilities)
22. How would you describe the relationship that men and women have within the Samoan Culture?
23. How would you describe the relationship between men and women within the Church?  
(from both a Samoan and Palagi perspective)

**\* Many thanks for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire!**

FESILI' E UIGA I TAMAITAI MA TINA

Tama'ita'i/Ali'i

Tausaga o le Soifuaga: \_\_\_\_\_

Alalafaga na  
fanau ai: \_\_\_\_\_

Fa'aipoipo pe leai:  
Ioe/Leai

O le umi talu ona alala i Niu Sila: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Poo lea sou finagalo (pe lagolago pe tete'e) i le o o tamaitai ma tina e faig aluega e maua mai ai ni tupe e fesoasoani i le tausia o le aiga?
2. O a ni mafuaaga o lou finagalo ua faaalila i luga?
3. O lea le Ekalesia na e lotu ai i Samoa ao lei malaga mai i Niu Sila?

4. O a ni faalapotopotoga na e auai ai ae i Samoa?
5. O lea le umi talu ona e lotu i le Ekalesia o loo e iai nei?
6. O a ni faalapotopotoga o loo e auai ai i le Ekalesia o loo e iai nei?
7. O e lotu i le lotu a lo outou aiga i Samoa?
8. O a faamoemoe ma sini o na faalapotopotoga o loo e auai ai i le Ekalesia?
9. Poo faapefea ona faagaioi na faalapotopotoga?



10. O a ni mafuaaga na ala ai ona e auai i na faalapotopotoga?  
(Faataitaiga: Ete fiafia iai poo lou faatasi atu ile faalapotopotoga e mafua ai ona sa e auai i Samoa).
11. E tele ni ou taimi e faaalu i n faalapotopotoga?
12. E iai ni ou tofi i totonu o na faalapotopotoga?
13. O ai e i totonu o na faalapotopotoga?  
(ni tagata na fananau ma soifua i Samoa poo Niu Sila).
14. O a tiute e tatau ona tauave e tama ma alii i totonu o le Ekalesia?

15. O a tiute e tatau ona tauave e tina ma tamaitai i totonu o le Ekalesia?
16. Aisea e ala ai ona faapitoa nei tiute i tina ma tamaitai?
17. Pe tutusa le taua o tiute a tamaitai ma tiute o alii?
18. Pe tatau ona tauave e alii po o tamaitai tiute o lo o taua i lalo? Faailoga le itupa e te manatu e tatau ona tauaveina nei tofiga. Tau mai ni mafuaaga o lou taofi:

- Tiakono Alii/Tamaitai

- Failautusi Alii/Tamaitai

- Teutupe Alii/Tamaitai

- Aoao Fesoasoani Alii/Tamaitai  
(Pe afai ete lotu Taiti)

- Faifeau Alii/Tamaitai

- Faifeau Toeaina Alii/Tamaitai

19. Pe ao e nei tofiga ona umia e e faaipoipo?
20. Pe ao ona fuafuaina i tausaga ole soifuaga?
21. Pe talafeagai ona faaofi mai le aganuu i totonu o le tapuaiga pei o le faasalalauga o taulaga/alofa/suafa atoa ai ma le faafoega o le Ekalesia i le ave o le faamuamua i e umia suafa matai?
22. Pe e fetoai le mau faaPapalagi ma le mau faaSamoa e faasino i galuega faatino o le itupa a tamaitai ma le itupa a alii?
23. Pe sili atu ona taualoa matai aofia matai fafine/faletua ma tausi i le faafoeina o le Ekalesia. Afai o lena pe mafai aisea?
24. E iai ni eseese e mafua mai ona o le itupa alii/tamaitai poo galuepa faapitoa i nei itupa ae tainane agavaa ma tomai?

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR YOUTH

Male/Female

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Communicant Member:  
Yes/No

\* Please circle appropriate box or fill in answer in space provided:

1. What or who influenced you to join your present church?

- a. Someone influenced me to.
- b. I experienced a sense of need or void in my feelings about life.
- c. I felt dissatisfaction with the other church or religious group in which I was active in the past.
- d. The opportunity to socialise and meet friends.
- e. Other \_\_\_\_\_

3. How long have you been a member of your present Church?

3. What groups or associations are you presently involved in?

4. Is your family involved with the above?

5. If you were born or raised in Samoa, please answer the following questions:

- What church did you belong to in Samoa?
- What groups or associations were you involved in?

6. How important would you say religion is in your life?

- a. Very important.
- b. Fairly important.
- c. Not very important.
- d. Don't know.

7. Are you satisfied with attending your present Church?

- a. Yes.
- b. No.
- c. Don't know.

\* Give the reasons for your answer \_\_\_\_\_

8. Do you think a person can be a good Christian if he or she doesn't attend Church?

- a. Yes.
- b. No.
- c. Don't know.

9. Do you think you will still be attending Church in 3 or 4 years?

- a. Yes.
- b. No.
- c. Don't know.

\* Give the reason(s) for your answer \_\_\_\_\_

10. As a young person, do you think the Church has a place for you?

11. If you were able to, what changes would you make to your present church for the benefit of the youth?

12. Which of the following services do you prefer to attend? Why?

- a. Combined Morning Service. (11 am)
- b. Samoan Afternoon Service. (3 pm)
- c. Regular Evening Service. (7 pm)
- d. Monthly Youth Service. (7 pm)

13. In your opinion, what do you think are the major issues facing young people today?

14. Do you think your present Church is dealing with these problems adequately or is it dealing with them at all?
15. Do you think there is a 'Samoan' way of doing things in Church?  
If so, please explain.....
16. How does being 'Samoan' affect [if at all] your participation in Church?
17. Do you have problems with 'Fa'aSamoa' and its influence in Church?
18. If you had the choice would you still be attending your present Church?
  - a. Yes.
  - b. No.
  - c. Don't Know.

19. If you answered 'no', where would you go instead?
- a. Another Church.
  - b. No Church at all.
  - c. Other \_\_\_\_\_
20. Do you play a sport that either regularly or sometimes prevents you from attending Church on Sunday?
21. Do you work either part-time or full-time which regularly or sometimes prevents you from attending Church on Sunday?
22. If none of the above sport or work commitments existed, would you attend Church?
23. What does 'Church' mean to you?
24. What does being 'Christian' mean to you?
25. What do you think 'Fa'aSamoa' means?



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